

DOUBLE-SIZED FIRST ISSUE!



NO. 1

TALES FROM THE CRYPT



JULY

FEATURING...



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE OLD WITCH



ENOCH



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THAT WRETCH, THE VAULT-KEEPER, HAS SABOTAGED THIS ISSUE OF TALES FROM THE CRYPT BECAUSE I GOT MY MAG ON THE NEWSSTANDS BEFORE HIS VAULT OF HORROR! HE CREEPT INTO THE PRINT SHOP THE NIGHT BEFORE WE WENT TO PRESS AND SWITCHED AROUND PAGES 5 AND 6 OF WILL ELDER'S STORY... TWO FOR THE SHOW JUST TO CONFUSE YOU READERS AND MAKE ME MAD! BUT SINCE WE PRINT THE COVERS LAST, I FOUND OUT IN TIME TO WARN YOU! ONCE HE'S FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT THIS I'M GONNA TAKE ONE OF HIS RAGS AND—HEH, HEH—GET EVEN! JUST WAIT!

This Issue's Credits

From *Tales From the Crypt* 33 (1952).
Front cover by Jack Davis.
"Lower Berth," art by Jack Davis.
"This 'Bick'll Kill You," art by George Evans and Jack Kamen.
"Grim Fairy Tale," art by Jack Kamen.
"None but the Lonely Heart," art by Graham Ingels.
From *Crime Suspense Stories* 17 (1953):
"Touch and Go," art by Johnny Craig, adapted from a story by Ray Bradbury.
"One for the Money," art by Jack Kamen.
"Fired," art by Al Williamson and Frank Frazetta.
"... Two for the Show," art by Bill Elder.
All stories colored by Marie Severin.

DREADFUL PLEASURES

by Jim Twitchell

Horror art is not, strictly speaking, a genre; it is rather a collection of motifs in a usually predictable sequence that gives us a specific physiological effect—the shivers. As the Fat Boy said in Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*, "I want to make your skin crawl."

We do not have to know what is going on to be affected. An audience, in fact, may search for artificial horror without much intellectual explanation or sophistication. The art demands audience participation or, better yet, conspiracy: like children huddled around the campfire asking for "just one more scary story."

No one has ever tracked the major carriers of horror—the vampire, the werewolf, and the "hulk with no name"—from their lairs in the subconscious, up through folklore, into the printed text of *Dracula*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Frankenstein*. From them came a veritable jungle of cinematic monsters.

Critics have uniformly neglected the word they so readily invoke—horror. It is a difficult word primarily because we think we know what it means: what is horrible is what we are frightened of. Give any journeyman moviemaker a razor and a young lady, or lumbering beast and a shrieking ingenue, and he should be able to scare the wits out of any audience. This is true as far as it goes, but horror really refers to a rather specific effect of that fright. To understand the meaning of

"horror" we are initially taken back to the latin word *horrere*, which means "to bristle," and it describes the way the hair stands on end during moments of shivering excitement. From this comes creeping flesh or, more simply, the "creeps." Hence both real and artificial horror—such as in *Tales From the Crypt*—offer a moment of ecstatic dread, a second of full-passioned fixity, of panic and exultation. The experience is commonly known as gooseflesh. What we call gooseflesh is usually caused by abrupt changes in body temperature and is the warm-blooded animal's attempt to shove up its thermostat. Our teeth chatter, knees knock, and skin shivers. We stand still and shudder, suddenly paralyzed.

At the height of horror we must scream or the tension, the pressure inside us, will cause us to go insane!

Terror, as differentiated from horror, must start anew in each generation, not because the objects we fear are so changeable, but because the images of them are. We now don't fear space invaders; we fear what we might bring back from space. A generation from now there will be a different "terror in the aisles." But horror is different. We will keep returning to watch the werewolf transform, or the vampire bite the virgin, or Dr. Frankenstein experiment in the laboratory, or Dr. Jekyll meet Mr. Hyde, and we will probably continue this interest until we resolve whatever it is in these myths that is unresolved within

(continued on inside back cover)

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THE CRYPT OF TERROR

HEN, HEN! GOT A COLLECTORS' ITEM FOR YOU FIBOS! GOT A REAL GREAT CHILLER-DILLER! GIVE THE MAN YOUR GRIMY LITTLE DIME IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO ALREADY, AND COME INTO THE CRYPT OF TERROR! THIS IS THE CRYPT-KEEPER, READY WITH ANOTHER OF MY TALES OF HORROR! SO SIT DOWN ON THE TANBARK FLOOR, AND I'LL BEGIN THE BLOOD-CURLING YARN I CALL...

**LOWER
BERTH!**

LONG BEFORE THE ADVENT OF RADIO, MOVIES, TELEVISION AND COMIC BOOKS, THE ONLY ENTERTAINMENT FOLKS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY ENJOYED WERE THE TRAVELLING CARNIVALS, WHICH SET UP THEIR GAILY COLORED TENTS ON VACANT TRACTS OF LAND AT THE OUTSKIRTS OF THEIR TOWNS! ABOUT 80 YEARS AGO, ONE OF THESE CARNIVALS CAME TO A SMALL TOWN IN THE OZARK MOUNTAINS...

RIGHT THIS WAY, FOLKS!
SEE THE **SIDE-SHOW!** SEE
THE **GREATEST COLLECTION**
OF **ODDITIES EVER TO BE**
ASSEMBLED UNDER ONE
TENT! RIGHT THIS WAY,
FOLKS!



THE SIDE SHOW OF THIS PARTICULAR CARNIVAL WAS OWNED BY A MAN NAMED ERNEST FEELEY! PATIENTLY, OVER THE YEARS, HE HAD ASSEMBLED A FABULOUS COLLECTION OF ODDITIES AND FREAKS! HE HAD THE USUAL ATTRACTIONS...

SEE FANNY, THE FAT LADY, FOLKS! FOUR HUNDRED AND FIFTY POUNDS OF FEMALE PULCHRITUDE! SEE HADNAR, THE SWORD-SWALLOWER... SKULL-FACE, THE LIVING SKELETON... FEGO, THE FIRE-EATER...



BUT ERNEST FEELEY HAD ONE ATTRACTION... A HEAD-LINE ATTRACTION... THAT NEVER FAILED TO DRAW THE CROWDS... TO SEPARATE THE CURIOUS FROM THEIR QUARTERS...

AND LAST BUT NOT LEAST, FOLKS... THE STAR ATTRACTION OF FEELEY'S SIDE-SHOW... THE MOST UNUSUAL ODDITY EVER TO BE PUT ON DISPLAY ANYWHERE... ANYTIME! INSIDE... IN ITS ORIGINAL SARCOPHAGUS... IS MYRNA, THE ONLY FEMALE EGYPTIAN MUMMY IN EXISTENCE! TWENTY-FIVE CENTS, FOLKS! RIGHT THIS WAY.



MYRNA, THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY, WAS OWNED BY ZACHARY GLING, A RETIRED ARCHEOLOGIST! ERNEST FEELEY PAID ZACHARY GLING A VERY LARGE SALARY FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF EXHIBITING MYRNA...

...AND NOW, FOLKS... IF YOU WILL STEP THIS WAY... DOCTOR GLING, WHO FOUND MYRNA, THE EGYPTIAN MUMMY, WILL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT HER AND SHOW HER TO YOU...



FIVE TIMES A DAY, ZACHARY GLING WOULD NARRATE HOW HE DISCOVERED MYRNA, AND THEN SHOW HER TO THE GAFING CUSTOMERS! HE'D EVEN UNDO PART OF HER WRAPPINGS...

MYRNA, THE ONLY FEMALE EGYPTIAN MUMMY IN AMERICA WAS FOUND IN THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS BY MY EXPEDITION! HER TOMB WAS DEEP IN THE CLIFFS THAT TOWER OVER THE NILE RIVER...



'ON THE TOMB WALLS, WE FOUND THE INSCRIPTIONS DESCRIBING HER INCARCERATION! IT SEEMS THAT MYRNA, OR MYRANAH, AS THE EGYPTIANS CALLED HER, WAS A LADY-IN-WAITING TO THE PHARAOH'S WIFE...

BRING ME MY PERFUME, MYRANAH!

YES, MISTRESS!



'MYRANAH WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL, AND SOON CAUGHT THE PHARAOH'S FANCY! BUT LOYAL MYRANAH, FAITHFUL TO HER MISTRESS, REPELLED THE PHARAOH'S ADVANCES...

DO NOT STRUGGLE, MY PET! I AM YOUR KING! YOU MUST DO AS I WISH!

NO! NO! I WILL NOT! NEVER! NEVER!



'THE PHARAOH, IN ANGER, ORDERED THAT SHE BE BURIED ALIVE AS PUNISHMENT! MYRANAH WAS FORCIBLY WRAPPED IN THE CEREMONIAL BURIAL WRINDINGS...

SHE FIGHTS LIKE A CAT, SIRE!

SHE WILL FIGHT NO MORE! HURRY!

EEEMNNPH!



AND SO, FOR FOUR THOUSAND YEARS, THIS POOR GIRL LAY IN HER TOMB UNTIL I UNCOVERED HER! AND NOW... I GIVE YOU...

MYRNA!

GASP! CHOKE!

THE MUMMIFIED BODY OF THE UNFORTUNATE SERVANT GIRL STOOD IN ITS SARCOPHAGUS, ITS ARMS FOLDED ACROSS ITS CHEST! THE CARNIVAL CUSTOMERS NEVER FAILED TO GASP AND SCREAM WHENEVER DOCTOR CLING WOULD UNCOVER IT.

AND NOW... I WILL REMOVE SOME OF THE WRAPPINGS!

IF THE SIGHT OF THE MUMMY WAS REVOLTING, HER UNWRAPPED FACE WAS EVEN MORE SO! THE WRINKLED, DRIED FLESH CLUNG TO HER SKULL LIKE WET TISSUE PAPER! HER EYES HAD RECEDED DEEP INTO THEIR SOCKETS! LIPS WERE DRAWN TIGHTLY BACK IN A LEERING GRIN! SOME CRIED OUT... SOME TURNED AWAY...

GOOD LORD!

BUT THERE WERE ALWAYS MORE THE NEXT NIGHT! MORE OF THE CURIOUS! WORD TRAVELED FAST IN SMALL TOWNS! THEY FLOCKED TO SEE MYRNA... SHE WELL EARNED HER KEEP! ERNEST FEELEY PAID ZACHARY CLING HIS SALARY HAPPILY! AND THEN, WHEN THE CARNIVAL HIT THAT SMALL OZARK TOWN...

YOU MR. FEELEY? MY NAME'S JEB SICKLES! I UNNERSTAN' YOU OWN THIS HERE SIDE-SHOW, MR. FEELEY! I THINK WEDBE YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN WHAT I GOT!

WHAT'S THAT, MR. SICKLES?

I'M THE DOG 'ROUND THESE PARTS, MR. FEELEY! AINT GOT NO LICENCE OR NUTHIN', BUT FOLKS LIKE WHAT I DO FOR 'EM SO THEY COME T'ME! 'BOUT TWO YEARS AGO, THIS HERE CRONE COME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS! I'D NEVER LAID EYES ON 'ER B'FORE! SHE BEGGED ME T'COME BACK WITH HER...

LOOK, MR. SICKLES! I'M A BUSY MAN! GET TO THE POINT! WHAT IS IT YOU'VE GOT THAT I'D BE INTERESTED IN?

I'LL GET TO IT, MR. FEELEY! TAKE IT EASY! ANYWAY, THIS OLD CRONE BEGGED ME SO BAD I WENT! SHE TOL' ME HER SON WAS SICK... TERRIBLE SICK! SHE SAID HE WAS A-DYIN'! SHE TOOK ME UP INTO THE MOUNTAINS TO THIS HERE CAVE! I NEARLY THROW'D UP AT WHAT I SAW!

WHAT WAS IT, MR. SICKLES?

'IT WAR HER SON, MR. FEELEY!
HER SON HAD TWO HEADS! IT WAS
HORRIBLE...

CHOKO!

KIN YUH...
KIN YUH DO
ANYTHING
FOR ENOCH?

'HE WAS TOO FAR GONE FOR ME
T'SAVE! HE DIED 'BOUT AN HOUR
AFTER WE GOT T' THE CAVE...

I'M SORRY, MAM!
I DONE ALL I
COULD! ENOCH
IS DEAD!

TAKE 'IM
AWAY! TAKE
'IM... SOB...
OUT OF MY
SIGHT!

HE MUSTA BEEN TWENTY-
TWO, MR. FEELEY! I TOOK
HIS BODY BACK DOWN
THE MOUNTAIN AND PUT
IT IN A MOONSHINE
STILL! I DIDN'T
WAN' NOBODY T'
SEE IT!

AND
YOU
STILL
HAVE IT...
THE TWO-
HEADED
BODY?

IT'S BEEN IN THE STILL
FOR TWO YEARS, MR.
FEELEY! THE MOONSHINE
SEEMS T'HAVE PRESERVED
IT! YOU...

TAKE ME TO IT!
QUICKLY!

MR. FEELEY AND THE QUACK DOCTOR PUSHED THEIR
WAY THROUGH THE CROWD OBLING AT MYRNA, THE
MUMMY! OUTSIDE THE CARNIVAL GROUNDS, A HORSE AND
WAGON WAITED! THEY DROVE TO A HIDDEN STILL...

THAR SHE
IS, MR.
FEELEY!

G'MON!

THE LIGHT FROM THE LANTERN CAST AN ORANGE GLOW
INTO THE HUGE WOODEN STILL-VAT! BELOW THE SUR-
FACE OF THE MOONSHINE, THE PULPY WHITE FACES
OF THE TWO-HEADED CORPSE STARED UP AT ERNEST
FEELEY...

THAT'S HIM...

GULP!

ERNEST TURNED TO JED SICKLES... HIS EYES WIDE... HIS
FACE FLUSHED...

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN
MY SHOW, JES? DO WHAT OLD
DOG CLING DOES! EXHIBIT
THIS HERE ENOCH! TELL HOW
YOU GOT HIM! I'LL PAY YOU
A GOOD SALARY!

JOIN UP WITH
YOU FELLERS,
EH? WELL, I
DUNNO! I... I
GUESS I'D
LIKE THAT!

SO, JEB SICKLES TOOK HIS TWO-HEADED PRESERVED BODY OUT OF THE STILL AND JOINED ERNEST FEELEY'S SIDE-SHOW! ENOCH WAS PLACED IN A SPECIALLY MADE GLASS TANK FILLED WITH FORMAL-DEHYDE, AND PUT ON EXHIBIT...

AND NOW FOLKS, I GIVE YOU DOCTOR JEBSON SICKLES... AND ENOCH!

FOLKS! I DISCOVERED ENOCH IN THE CAVE OF AN OLD MOUNTAIN CRONEBACK IN THE OZARKS! HE DIED IN MY ARMS...

WHEN JEB DREW BACK THE CURTAIN REVEALING THE PASTY-SKINNED BLOATED TWO-HEADED CORPSE OF ENOCH, THE SIDE-SHOW CUSTOMERS WOULD GRINCE AND SHUDDER IN REVULSION...

AND NOW, I GIVE YOU... ENOCH! THE TWO-HEADED MAN!

GHOKE! GULP!

COUGH

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR ERNEST FEELEY TO REALIZE THAT THE THING IN THE HUGE GLASS TANK WAS A REALLY VALUABLE EXHIBIT AND DESERVED STAR BILLING, LIKE MYRNA...

THAT'S RIGHT, JEB! I'M MOVIN' YOU UP TO STAR ATTRACTION! YOU'LL SHAKE IT WITH DOG CLING, HERE!

THANKS, HMMPH... MR. FEELEY

SO ENOCH WAS PLACED OPPOSITE MYRNA... AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, JEB SICKLES AND ZACH CLING EXHIBITED THEIR ODDITIES TO THE CURIOUS WHO'D PAID THEIR QUARTERS TO SEE THEM.

...MYRNA...

...ENOCH...

FIVE TIMES A DAY, MYRNA'S ROTTED BROWN WRAPPINGS WERE REMOVED FROM HER MUMMIFIED FACE...

GASP...

GHOKE...

AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, THE CURTAIN HIDING ENOCH'S TANK WAS WITHDRAWN REVEALING THE TWISTING, TURNING PRESERVED CORPSE...

AND FIVE TIMES A DAY, AS THE CROWD OGLED AND GASPED... PASTY-SKINNED, TWO-HEADED ENOCH, FLOATING IN HIS FORMAL-DEHYDE WORLD, STARED WITH GLAZED EYES AT THE PUTRID, MUMMIFIED, UNWRAPPED FACE OF MYRNA THE MUMMY...

THE CARNIVAL MOVED ON FROM TOWN TO TOWN! THE CROWDS FLOCKED TO SEE ENOCH AND MYRNA! AND JEALOUSY BETWEEN ZACH CLING AND JEB SICKLES FLAMED...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE CUTTING MY SALARY? IF IT WASN'T FOR MYRNA...

ENOCH PULLS 'EM IN TOO, ZACH! I'VE BEEN UNDERPAYING JEB! HE AND YOU GET THE SAME FROM NOW ON! I'M LOWERIN' YOUR PAY, AND RAISIN' HIS!



THE BLOATED BODY WITH THE STARING PAIRS OF EYES SWAYED IN THE FORMALDEHYDE! THE DRIED REMAINS IN THE ROTTED WRAPPINGS STOOD SILENTLY! FIVE TIMES A DAY THEY GAZED UPON EACH OTHER...

... ENOCH ...

... MYRNA ...



THEN ERNEST FEELEY... ALWAYS THE BUSINESS MAN... ANNOUNCED...

I'M MOVIN' YOU AND MYRNA OUT FRONT, CLING! WE NEED A DRAW FOR THE ADMISSIONS! JEB AND ENOCH ARE THE STARS NOW...



AND SO, WHEN THE ROTTED WRAPPINGS WERE REMOVED FROM MYRNA'S SUNKEN, MUMMIFIED EYES, SHE LOOKED OUT ACROSS THE CROWD AND SAW NOTHING...

I GIVE YOU... MYRNA...



AND WHEN THE CURTAIN WAS PULLED BACK UNCOVERING ENOCH'S TANK, HE LOOKED OUT ACROSS THE CROWD AND SAW NOTHING...

I GIVE YOU... ENOCH!



THUS, IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT, WHEN THE CARNIVAL FOLK LAY ASLEEP, A DRIED AND BONEY HAND MOVED SLOWLY... HESITANTLY... PULLING AWAY ITS ROTTED BROWN WRAPPINGS...



... WHILE A BLOATED, PALE HAND SLID UPWARD AND OVER THE TANK-RIM, PULLING ITS CHALKY, PULPY BODY AFTER IT...



THE MORNING HEARD THE SIDE-SHOW TENT ECHO WITH ANGRY VOICES...

HE STOLE ENOUGH!
HE STOLE MYRNA!
CALM DOWN, YOU TWO!



ERNEST QUIETED THE RAGING ODDITY OWNERS...

USE YOUR HEADS, YOU FOOLS! IF BOTH ARE MISSING, NEITHER OF YOU COULD HAVE DONE IT!



OLD DOC CLING KNELT TO THE TAM-BARK AND PICKED UP A MUSTY-SMELLING FRAGMENT...

A PIECE OF MYRNA'S WRAPPINGS!
DROPS OF FORMALDEHYDE! THEY GO THAT WAY!



THE THREE MEN FOLLOWED THE FRAGMENTS OF MUMMY WRAPPINGS AND THE DROPLETS OF FORMAL-DEHYDE OUT OF THE SIDE-SHOW TENT AND INTO THE MORNING SUNLIGHT! THE TRAIL WAS CLEAR... VERY CLEAR...

IT LEADS TO THAT HOUSE!
LOOK AT THE SIGN!
GASP! JUSTICE OF THE... GOOD LORD!



THE JUSTICE OF THE PEACE WAS VERY FRIENDLY! HE TOLD THE SIDE-SHOW MEN ALL HE KNEW...

GOUPLE CAME LAST NIGHT! YEP! WANTED TO GET MARRIED! I DID IT! I PERFORMED THE CEREMONY!
WASN'T THERE ANYTHING... ER STRANGE ABOUT THEM?



SHUCKS! ALL I CAN SAY IS THEY MUST'VE BEEN DRINKING! SMELLED MIGHTY BAD... LIKE AS IF THEY'D BEEN! BUT FIVE BUCKS IS FIVE BUCKS!



DIDN'T SEE NUTHIN'! CAN'T SEE! I'M BLIND, Y'KNOW!
BLIND! GOOD LORD!



HEH, HEH! CAREFUL NOW! DON'T PEEK! HERE COMES THE FINISH! BRACE YOURSELVES! FIRST, LET ME SAY THAT MR. FEELEY, JEB, AND ZACH LOST MYRNA AND ENOCH'S TRAIL AFTER THEY LEFT THE J. P.'S JUST COULDN'T FIND 'EM! IN FACT, IT WASN'T TILL A YEAR LATER, WHEN THE CARNIVAL RETURNED TO THE VERY OZARK TOWN WHERE ENOCH HAD FIRST JOINED THE SIDE-SHOW...



... THAT MR. FEELEY HEARD ABOUT THE STRANGE DOIN'S UP IN THE MOUNTAINS...

SOMEBODY SAID THEY SEEN 'EM, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE 'EM! WHO EVER HEARD OF A LIVIN' MUMMY AND A TWO-HEADED CORPSE...

WHERE? WHERE? DID THEY SEE 'EM?



UP IN THE OLD CRONE'S CAVE! SHE'S DEAD NOW! BUT THE FOLKS ROUND HERE ARE MIGHTY SUPERSTITIOUS! IF YOU ASK ME, THEY'RE SEEIN' THINGS! NOW...

JEB'LL TAKE ME THERE! HE KNOWS WHERE IT IS!



THEY WENT! JEB AND ZACH... WHO'D STAYED ON WITH THE CARNIVAL AS HANDY MEN... AND MR. FEELEY? THEY WENT UP THE MOUNTAIN TO THE OLD CRONE'S CAVE...



LOOK!

GOOD LORD!

IT'S THEM!

AND THE THREE CARNIVAL MEN DRAGGED THEIR LONG-LOST ODDITIES BACK DOWN THE MOUNTAIN...

MYRNA! MY MYRNA!

ENOCH! MY BOY!

AT LAST! AFTER OVER A YEAR!



BUT THE THREE MEN WERE OUT OF EARSHOT WHEN THE WAIL DRIFTED OUT FROM DEEP IN THE BOWELS OF THE CRONE'S CAVE! THEY NEVER SAW THE INFANT-THING GRAWL OUT INTO THE SUNLIGHT... ITS EYES STREAMING WITH TEARS... CRYING FOR ITS PARENTS...



HEH, HEH! YEP! THAT'S IT, KIDDIES! THAT'S MY STORY! YEP! ENOCH OF THE DOUBLE DOMES

WAS MY OLD MAN, AND MYRNA THE MUMMY WAS MY OLD LADY! YOU MIGHT SAY, THE MUMMY WAS MY MOMMY! BY THE WAY! I UNDERSTAND THAT THERE'S A CARNIVAL TODAY... EIGHTY YEARS LATER...

THAT STILL EXHIBITS A MUMMY AND A TWO-HEADED PRESERVED CORPSE! IF ANY OF YOU SEE THEM... WRITE ME! I WANT TO SEND A CARD! IT'S THEIR ANNIVERSARY NEXT MONTH!



THE VAULT OF HORROR!

HEH, HEH! NOW IT'S TIME FOR A JAUNT INTO THE VAULT OF HORROR, GREEPS! THIS IS YOUR VAULT-KEEPER, READY TO RELATE THIS *BLOOD-CURLING TALE* FROM MY COLLECTION! SO COME IN, SIT DOWN ON THAT *BLOOD-STAINED HOTEL ROOM RUG*, AND I'LL TELL YOU HOW IT *GO*T THAT WAY! I CALL THIS *SICKENING SOJOURN* INTO THE *SCREAMING SEMI-DARKNESS OF SORCIONESS...*

THIS TRICK'LL KILL YOU!



HERBERT MARKINI MOVED THROUGH THE MILLING CALCUTTA CROWDS, MOPPING HIS PERSPIRATION-BATHED FACE! THE BLAZING INDIAN SUN WAS DIRECTLY OVERHEAD! THE HEAT WAS UNBEARABLE! HERBERT CURSED...

WHY I EVER CAME TO THIS DISEASE-IMPESTED HELL-HOLE, I'LL NEVER KNOW! I HAVEN'T FOUND ONE NEW ILLUSION SINCE I'VE BEEN HERE! INDIAN FAKIRS! BAN! LUCKY THING I LEFT INEZ AT THE HOTEL! SHE'D PASS OUT IN THIS

HEAT!



THE GREAT MARKINI, FAMOUS IN THE UNITED STATES FOR HIS ASTOUNDING FEATS OF MAGIC, PUSHED HIS WAY THROUGH THE DARK-SKINNED THROG... STOPPING FOR A FEW MINUTES TO WATCH AS EACH SQUATTING INDIAN FAKIR WOULD PERFORM HIS TRICKS AND ILLUSIONS...



MMMPH! THE OLD CABBAGE-
IN-THE-GROUND-ILLUSION!
OLD AS THE HILLS!

HERBERT MOVED DOWN THE LITTER-FILLED ALLEY TO WHERE THE INDIAN GIRL SQUATTED BEFORE HER ODDLY-SHAPED BASKET! THE CROWD BEHIND, OUT IN THE MARKET-PLACE, SEEMED TO FADE FROM EARSHOT! THE GIRL LOOKED UP AT MARKINI AND SMILED...



YOU... WANT.. TRICK?
I DO... FOR RUPEE!

THE GIRL PULLED A SMALL REED INSTRUMENT FROM THE FOLDS IN HER GOWN AND PUT IT TO HER LIPS! SHE TOOK A DEEP BREATH AND BEGAN TO BLOW SOFTLY! THE WEIRD NOTE TREMBLED! THE COIL OF ROPE IN THE BASKET STIRRED...



WHAT THE...?

THE SINGLE NOTE CONTINUED! ONE END OF THE COIL OF ROPE STOOD UP... SWAYING LIKE AN ENTRANCED COBRA...



GOOD LORD!

SATISFIED THAT THERE WAS NOTHING NEW TO SEE, NOTHING HE COULD ADD TO HIS FABULOUS MAGIC ACT, HERBERT WOULD MOVE ON FROM ONE FAKIR TO THE NEXT! THEN, IN A DARK ALLEY OFF THE TEAMING MARKET PLACE, HE SAW HER! THE DARK-HAIRED, FLASHING EYED INDIAN GIRL...



HELLO! WHAT'S THAT? SHE WEARS
A FAKIR'S SHAWL! I WONDER WHAT
SHE HAS IN THE BASKET!

THE COIN TINKLED TO THE COBBLE-STONES AT THE GIRL'S BARE FEET! SHE PICKED IT UP, EXAMINED IT, AND... LIFTING THE LID OFF THE BASKET... TOSSED THE COIN IN! HERBERT PEERED DOWN! INSIDE THE BASKET LAY A COIL OF HEAVY ROPE, OLD AND FRAYED...



YOU HEAR TELL OF
INDIAN ROPE TRICK?

SURE! I'VE HEARD TELL
OF IT! BUT THAT'S ALL! JUST
TALK! I DON'T BELIEVE
THAT THERE IS SUCH A
THING!

AND AS THE GIRL'S BREATH RAN OUT AND THE NOTE BEGAN TO FADE... THE END OF THE ROPE BEGAN TO RISE HIGHER AND HIGHER INTO THE AIR...



I DON'T BELIEVE
IT!

WHEN THE LAST VIBRATION ENDED, THE ROPE STOOD UPRIGHT AT ITS FULL UNCOILED LENGTH... FIFTEEN... MAYBE TWENTY FEET INTO THE AIR...



ASTOUNDING!

THE GIRL GOT TO HER FEET AND MOVED TO THE ROPE! AS HERBERT WATCHED, HORRIFIED, SHE BEGAN TO CLIMB IT...



GODD LORD!

SHE PULLED HERSELF EASILY, HAND OVER HAND, TILL SHE REACHED THE TOP.



I'LL BUY IT! I'LL PAY YOU ANYTHING... ANYTHING!

THE DARK-HAIRED, FLASHING-EYED NATIVE GIRL SLID TO THE GROUND ONCE AGAIN AND THE ROPE COLLAPSED INTO THE BASKET...



HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT FOR THE TRICK? NAME YOUR PRICE, GIRL!

I CANNOT SELL THE ROPE! IT WAS MY MOTHER'S AND HER MOTHER'S... AND...

BAN! KEEP YOUR ROPE! TELL ME HOW IT IS DONE! TELL ME THE SECRET! I'LL MAKE MY OWN...



THERE IS NO SECRET, SAHIB! IT IS THE ROPE! YOU CANNOT MAKE ONE! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

THE ROPE?! WHAT KIND OF NONSENSE IS THAT? IT'S AN ORDINARY ROPE! WHAT'S INSIDE? A WIRE? WHAT'S UNDER THE BASKET? A TRAP-ODOR? C'MON! I'LL PAY YOU FIVE HUNDRED RUPEES!



IT IS THE ROPE ITSELF, SAHIB! SEE?

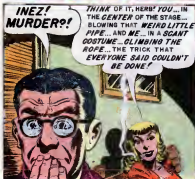
THE GIRL LIFTED THE BASKET! THERE WAS NO TRAP DOOR BELOW... NO HOLE OUT OF WHICH A POLE COULD BE EXTENDED... NOTHING...



YOU SEE, SAHIB? IT IS THE ROPE! AND THE ROPE IS NOT FOR SALE!

IMPOSSIBLE! THERE MUST BE A TRICK TO IT! THERE MUST!

THAT NIGHT, THE GREAT MARKINI PACED HIS HOTEL ROOM NERVOUSLY! FINALLY THE DOOR OPENED AND A WOMAN ENTERED...



HERE WAS A TIMID KNOCK ON THE HOTEL ROOM DOOR! HERBERT SWUNG IT OPEN.

COME IN!
COME IN! AH!
I SEE YOU
HAVE THE
BASKET!

YOU! YOU ARE
THE MAN I
PERFORMED
FOR THIS
AFTERNOON!



YES! MY
NAME IS
MARKINI! IN
THE UNITED
STATES, I AM
A **FAMOUS
MAGICIAN!**
THIS IS MY
WIFE, **INEZ!**

AH! THE
LADY THAT
**INVITED ME
HERE!** SHE
SAID I
**WOULD NOT
BE ABLE TO
MAKE THE
ROPE RISE
HERE!**



THAT'S **RIGHT,**
HONEY! I THINK
YOU'VE GOT SOME
**WIRE ARRANGE-
MENT** IN THAT
ALLEY BACK
THERE!

I TOLD YOU
BOTH! IT IS
THE **ROPE...**
**NOTHING
MORE! WATCH...**



THE GIRL PLACED THE BASKET ON THE FLOOR OF THE ROOM! THEN SHE TOOK OUT THE CURIOUS REED INSTRUMENT AND BEGAN TO BLOW! THE WEIRD NOTE FILLED THE ROOM! THE ROPE BEGAN TO RISE...



IT'S IN THE BASKET, **HERB!**
THE GIMMICK MUST BE IN
THERE...OR IN THE ROPE...

I'LL GET
THE 'ER...

SUDDENLY...THE WEIRD-SOUNDING, TREMBLING NOTE WAS OUT SHORT! THE ROPE COLLAPSED! HERBERT'S POWERFUL FINGERS HELD THE INDIAN GIRL'S NECK IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP...



DON'T LET HER
SCREAM, HERB!

I GASP...
WON'T...

SOON, THE THROTTLED NATIVE GIRL'S BODY WENT LIMP AND SHE SLID TO THE FLOOR...



SHE... SHE'S
DEAD!

G'NOW! LET'S LOOK
AT THAT ROPE!

THE MURDERERS RUSHED TO THE COLLAPSED ROPE LYING ON THE HOTEL ROOM RUG! HERB SEARCHED THE AND EXAMINED IT CLOSELY! INEZ PICKED IT UP BASKET...



THE ROPE...IT'S NOT
HOLLOW! THERE'S
NO WIRE! IT'S...IT...

THERE'S NOTHING IN
THE BASKET!
NOTHING!

INEZ AND HERBERT STARED AT EACH OTHER...

NO GIMMICK!
NO PROP!
BUT...BUT...

WE SAW IT START
RISING! IT
WAS WORKING!



SUDDENLY INEZ'S GLANCE FELL! THE STRANGE-LOOKING REED INSTRUMENT WAS STILL CLUTCHED IN THE DEAD NATIVE GIRL'S HAND.

THE PIPE, HERB!
TRY THE PIPE!

BUT...BUT
WHAT GOOD
WILL THAT
DO?



HERB WRENCHED THE FLUTE-LIKE INSTRUMENT FROM THE CORPSE AND PUT IT TO HIS LIPS! THE WEIRD NOTE ECHOED THROUGH THE ROOM...

LOOK, HERB!
LOOK!



THE PRAYED END OF THE ROPE BEGAN TO RISE...

KEEP BLOWING, HERB!
KEEP BLOWING!



HIGHER AND HIGHER THE ROPE ROSE UNTIL IT TOUCHED THE CEILING OF THE ROOM! HERB'S BREATH RAN OUT AND THE NOTE FADED! THE ROPE STOOD STIFFLY...

SHE...GASP...SHE WASN'T
LYING! IT IS THE ROPE
THERE'S SOMETHING
ABOUT IT...

WE'VE GOT A
GOLD MINE, HERB!
A GOLD MINE!



INEZ MOVED TO THE ROPE! SHE CLOSED HER HANDS AROUND IT AND BEGAN TO PULL HERSELF UP...

IT HOLDS ME, HERB!
I CAN CLIMB IT!

WE'LL KNOCK THEM DEAD!
INEZ! JUST WAIT TILL
WE GET BACK TO THE
STATES! WE'LL...



INEZ HAD REACHED THE TOP OF THE ROPE! SUDDENLY...HER FACE WAS CONTORTED IN PAIN! HER EYES BULGED IN HORROR...

HERB! I...EEEEEEEEEEEEEE!



HERBERT MARKINI STARED AT THE SPOT NEAR THE CEILING WHERE INEZ HAD BEEN! SHE'D SIMPLY VANISHED! HER HYSTERICAL SHRIEK CAME FROM VERY FAR AWAY...



THE ROPE CURLED UPWARD...THE PRAYED END STILL IN THE BASKET WHIPPED OUTWARD...WRAPPING AROUND HERBERT'S NECK...



THE COMPLAINTS OF NEIGHBORS BROUGHT THE MANAGER OF THE CALCUTTA HOTEL TO HERBERT AND INEZ MARKINI'S ROOM! HE FOUND THE MASTER MAGICIAN HANGING FROM A ROPE...SWAYING CRAZILY! THE ROPE ENDED AT THE CEILING...APPARENTLY UNATTACHED...



SUDDENLY A WAVE OF NAUSEA SWEEPED OVER THE GREAT MARKINI! OBJECTS RAINED DOWN FROM NOWHERE ABOUT HIM...FALLING TO THE CALCUTTA HOTEL ROOM FLOOR! HORRIBLE OBJECTS! QUIVERING PIECES OF INEZ'S BODY...



AND SLOWLY...STEADILY...THE ROPE CONTINUED TO RISE...UNTIL...



HEH, HEH! THAT ABOUT WRAPS IT UP, KIDDIES...NEATLY KNOTTED! WHEN THEY TRIED TO CUT POOR HERBIE DOWN, THE ROPE JUST COLLAPSED AND HE FELL TO THE FLOOR AMID INEZ'S DISMEMBERED REMAINS! AS FOR THE INDIAN GIRL...THEY FOUND NO TRACE OF HER! WHAT HAPPENED TO HER BODY? NEXT TIME YOU'RE IN CALCUTTA, LOOK FOR HER IN THAT ALLEYWAY! SHE'LL BE THERE, WITH HER ROPE! JUST BE CAREFUL! DON'T LET HER STRING YOU ALONG!



A RARE E.C. OFFER

Seventeen years ago a small publishing company called **East Coast Comix** reprinted a dozen of the original E.C. in full color as regular 32-page comic books. Without national distribution the market was not able to sustain their continuation. Shortly after they ceased production we bought the remaining small inventory, realizing they would become **real collector's items** someday. With the return of E.C. through Gladstone, that day has come! None of these 1973 and '74 reprints is scheduled to be duplicated by Gladstone before 1992 and some later than that. The **Two Fisted Tales** and **Shock SuspenStories** comics have no place on our schedule at the present time. The following are available individually or as a lot while the very limited supply lasts:



- 1. The Crypt of Terror** 1, Feb. 1955 **\$12.00**
Planned to debut as E.C.'s fourth horror title, it instead became the **last issue of Tales From the Crypt**, number 46. It contains a Jack Davis werewolf story and George Evans' famous razor blade sizzler, "Bird Alloys." Highly recommended. Very very limited.

6 Crime SuspenStories 25, Oct. 1954 **\$5.00**
Jack Kamen's **Bad deals** with multiple murder. Reed Crandall's story involves a knife and some "cutting up" during a prison break. Bernie Knglstein's effort chronicles madness and George Evans' yarn weaves brutal fiction of a sadistic police lieutenant.
- 2 Weird Science** 15, Sept. 1952 **\$8.00**
Incredible issue, with the first E.C. story by Al Williamson, who quickly became a favorite and "The Marbans," one of Wallace Wood's best. Also, a photo and biography of Joe Orlando, who draws captive earthmen in "Bum Steer."

7 The Vault of Horror 26, Aug. 1952 **\$6.00**
Putrid palpitations of a ghoul and a vampire as love, werewolves, walking corpses and a voodoo curse are all rendered in color by Johnny Craig, Jack Davis, Sid Check and Graham Ingels.
- 3 Shock SuspenStories** 12, Dec. 1953 **\$5.00**
Drug abuse is dealt with for one of the first times in comics in the powerful Joe Orlando effort, "The Monkey." Reed Crandall's "The Kidnapper" generated mail from many parents. Wally Wood touches on suicide in "The Fall Guy." And a murderous alcoholic is portrayed in "Deadline" by Jack Kamen.

8 Shock SuspenStories 6, Dec. 1952 **\$6.00**
One story each of crime, suspense, sci-fi and horror, plus a biography and photo of fan favorite Wally Wood. Graham Ingels illustrates a rare appearance of the Old Witch outside the horror titles. Wood's "Under Cover" is a shocker dealing with overt prejudice that was largely ignored by society in the 1950s. Great issue!
- 4 The Haunt of Fear** 12, Mar. 1952 **\$5.00**
Two rotting corpse stories highlight an issue of great art by "Ghastly" Graham Ingels and Jack Davis. Johnny Craig has a story, biography and a photo. His story of a love triangle involves two shootings and a mysterious tattoo that miraculously implicates the killer.

9 Two Fisted Tales 34, July, 1953 **\$5.00**
Jack Davis writes and draws the lead western. Betsy and Wally Wood conceive "Trial by Arms," a medieval story of treachery and murder. John Severn inks a desert epic and George Evans illustrates his specialty—a finale about World War I flying aces.
- 5 Weird Fantasy** 13, May, 1952 **\$5.00**
Special issue with two tales illustrated by Wallace Wood, including "Home to Stay," an unforgettable adaptation of two Ray Bradbury short stories. E.C.'s science fiction and horror editor/artist Al Feldstein has a bio with photo.

10 The Haunt of Fear 23, Jan. 1954 **\$5.00**
Jack Kamen does one of his famous "Grim" Fairy Tales, this time a horrific version of Hansel and Gretel. A dark, brooding, beautifully drawn Jack Davis swamp tale and a werewolf story are also featured.

A complete set of all ten classics, while all are still available: \$50.00

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THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S GRIM FAIRY TALE!



ONCE UPON A TIME, LONG, LONG AGO, IN A KINGDOM FAR, FAR AWAY, THERE WAS A CASTLE! AND IN THIS CASTLE DWELT A KING... A QUEEN... AND A YOUNG DASHING PRINCE...

PRINCE JUNIOR! HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I TOLD YOU NOT TO DASH THROUGH THE HALLS LIKE THAT!

SOB... I FELL ON MY ROYAL... SOB...



NOW THE KING AND QUEEN OF THIS FAR, FAR AWAY KINGDOM WERE VERY BUSY... KINGING AND QUEENING! THEY'D HAD NO TIME TO TAKE CARE OF YOUNG PRINCE JUNIOR! SO... THEY'D HIRED A NURSE WHEN JUNIOR WAS JUST A BABE...

HOW IS PRINCE JUNIOR TODAY, NURSE?

MAY WE SEE HIM?

HUSH! HE'S SLEEPING! YOU CAN HAVE JUST ONE PEEK... THAT'S ALL!



NATURALLY, AS PRINCE JUNIOR GREW, HE BECAME MORE AND MORE ATTACHED TO HIS OLD NURSE...

PRINCE JUNIOR! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? OH, DEAR...

GIGGLE...

GIGGLE! I TIED YOU A PIN STINGS TO ME BEWLT! WE IS ATTACHED!



EVERY DAY, NURSE FANNY (FOR THAT WAS HER NAME!) WOULD DRESS PRINCE JUNIOR...

THERE! YOU LOOK VERY NICE! NOW DON'T GET DIRTY! YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER ARE COMING TO SEE YOU SOON!

YETN, NURTH FANNY!



... WOULD SCOLD HIM WHEN HE WAS NAUGHTY...

I TOLD YOU NOT TO GET DIRTY... YOU BAD, BAD BOY!

AND, HOW DID I KNOW THEY PUNLED UP THE DRAW-BRIDGE?



... WOULD READ TO HIM WHEN HE WAS GOOD...

WEAD TO ME ABOUT THE WICKED WITCH WHAT COOKS THE BAD WITTLE PEASANT CHILDREN IN HER OVEN, NURTH, FANNY!

ALL RIGHT, PRINCE JUNIOR! LET'S SEE! AN! HERE! 'ONCE UPON A TIME...



... WOULD TUCK HIM IN AT NIGHT!

GOOD NIGHT, PRINCE JUNIOR!

JUST ONE MORE STORY, NURTH FANNY! THE ONE ABOUT THE WICKED WITCH WHAT COOKS THE BAD WITTLE PEASANT CHILDREN!



NURSE FANNY WAS MORE OF A MOTHER TO PRINCE JUNIOR THAN THE QUEEN...

I LOVE YOU, NURTH FANNY!

AND I LOVE YOU, LITTLE PRINCE!

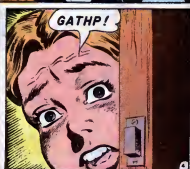
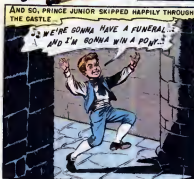


AND SO, WHEN PRINCE JUNIOR WOKE UP ONE MORNING AND FOUND NURSE FANNY LYING VERY STILL...

NURTH FANNY! NURTH FANNY! THEPEAK TO ME!







NURSE FANNY WAS STRETCHED OUT ON A VELVET-DRAPED BIER! AT HER HEAD, TWO CANDLES BURNED! THE ROOM WAS DARK, SAVE FOR THE GLOW FROM THE TWO FLICKERING FLAMES! BUT THERE WAS ENOUGH LIGHT FOR PRINCE JUNIOR TO SEE...



SUDDENLY, THE ROOM WAS FILLED WITH AN EERIE MOAN.



NURSE FANNY SAT UP, SHAKING HER HEAD...

OH, DEAR! I MUST HAVE HAD AN ATTACK! I HAVEN'T HAD ONE OF THOSE IN YEARS!

NURTH FANNY!
NURTH FANNY!
YOU'RE NOT DEAD!



PRINCE JUNIOR RAN INTO NURSE FANNY'S OUT-STRETCHED ARMS AND SHE HUGGED HIM TENDERLY.

NO, MY DEAR! I'M NOT DEAD! YOU KNOW I WOULDN'T LEAVE YOU!

OH, NURTH FANNY!
I... I...



* FANNY, YOU SEE, SUFFERED OCCASIONAL GATALEPTIC FITS WHICH MADE HER APPEAR DEAD. AND AFTER ALL, HOW GOOD WERE DOCTORS IN THOSE DAYS, ANYHOW?

SUDDENLY PRINCE CHARMING THOUGHT ABOUT ALL HIS COUSINS

...NOT IN A MILLION YEARS...



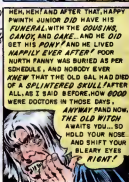
...BECAUSE YOU'RE MY BABY...



AND THEN HE THOUGHT ABOUT ALL THE CANDY...

...AND I'D NEVER LEAVE MY BABY...





THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

WELL...HEE,HEE...IT'S ME...YOUR HOSTESS IN THE HAUNT OF FEAR, THE OLD WITCH, READY TO RUSTLE UP ANOTHER REVOLTING RECIPE IN MY CRUDDY CAULDRON! SO, CRAWL IN, CREEPS! KNOT YOUR DRIBBLE NAPKINS AROUND YOUR SCRAWNY NECKS...FASTEN YOUR DROOL CUPS...AND I'LL DISH OUT THE TALE OF TERROR I CALL...

NONE BUT THE LONELY HEART!

LONELY?

IT HAD ALWAYS BEEN A SIMPLE MATTER FOR HOWARD! AFTER ALL, HE WAS RATHER GOOD-LOOKING IN A MATURE SORT OF WAY! OLD MAIDS AND WIDOWS WERE ATTRACTED TO HIM! BESIDES...THE PHOTOGRAPH HE'D SEND THEM WAS A PARTICULARLY GOOD ONE...

HEH, HEH! LISTEN TO THIS, AMO!

'DEAR HOWARD,

I RECEIVED YOUR PICTURE ALONG WITH YOUR DELIGHTFULLY WRITTEN LETTER TODAY! YOU LOOK VERY NICE! ENCLOSED IS MY PHOTO! I'M SORRY IT ISN'T A RECENT SNAP! IT WAS TAKEN TWO YEARS AGO...

HOWARD PATTED HIS DOG'S HEAD AND SMILED...



HE LIFTED THE PICTURE FROM THE ENVELOPE AND GASPED...



INDEED, HOWARD'S LATEST PROPOSED VICTIM WAS BEAUTIFUL! HOWARD STUDIED HER FOR A MOMENT, THOUGHTFULLY...



HOWARD SAT BACK, THE PICTURE IN HIS LAP, AND LIT HIS PIPE! THE SMOKE CURLED UP LAZILY, THINNING AS IT DRIFTED TOWARD THE CEILING...

REMEMBER THE FIRST PICTURE WE EVER GOT, KING? LET'S SEE! ALMOST SEVEN YEARS AGO IT WAS! WHAT WAS HER NAME? OH, YES! MATILDA! MATILDA FILBY!



'WE GOT HER NAME FROM A LONELY-HEARTS CLUB LIST! REMEMBER? THAT WAS BACK WHEN I FIRST DECIDED TO START THIS LITTLE 'LOVE-FOR-MONEY' GAME! AFTER A COUPLE OF WARM LETTERS CROSSED, IT CAME...'

WHEN! WHAT A FACE! LOOK AT THIS, KING! HOW COULD I EVER LOVE AN UGLY WENCH LIKE THIS...



'BUT SHE HAD MONEY, DIDN'T SHE, KING? REMEMBER? SHE WROTE, DESCRIBING HER HOUSE... THE FURNISHINGS...'

SHE'S RICH THOUGH, KING! SHE'S GOT LOOT! AND SHE LIVES ALONE! MAYBE... CHOKO... MAYBE LOOKS AREN'T EVERYTHING!



'SO WE TOOK THE PLUNGE, EH, BOY? WE WROTE PASSIONATE TOMES OF LOVE, AND FINALLY PROPOSED! AND SHE ACCEPTED! SO WE PAWNEED MY WATCH, BOUGHT A NEW SUIT OF CLOTHES... AND A TICKET... AND WENT...'

HOWARD—DEAR ONE!

MATILDA! MY PET!



'HOW LONG WAS IT AFTER OUR WEDDING, KING? SIX MONTHS? NOT MUCH MORE! POOR MATILDA! SHE NEVER EVEN KNEW WE'D LOOSENEED THE TOP CELLAR STAIR...

EEEEAAHH!

MATILDA! WHAT IS IT?

'THE FALL DIDN'T KILL HER, DID IT? WE HAD TO GO DOWN AND FINISH THE JOB! MESSY BUSINESS!'

HOWARD...GASP...I'M HURT...

GASP...I...I...

HOWARD!

'HOW MUCH DID WE MAKE ON THAT DEAL, KING? LET'S SEE! WE SOLD THE HOUSE FOR TEN THOUSAND... AND...OH, YES! ALL TOLD, ABOUT SIXTY GRAND!'

YOU'RE... LEAVING US, MR. CROWN?

WHY...YES, MRS. SENTINE! I...I JUST CAN'T STAY HERE...WITH ALL THESE MEMORIES...

'HEH, HEH! SO WE MOVED ON, EH, KING? AND ABOUT THREE MONTHS LATER, WE CONTACTED OUR SECOND VICTIM! SHE'D ADVERTIZED IN A PERSONAL COLUMN, HAIN'T SHE? YET...IT BEGAN AGAIN!'

WELL, AT LEAST SHE'S BETTER THAN THE LAST ONE, EH, KING? LORD, AREN'T THERE ANY PRETTY RICH WIDOWS?

'TOOK US SIX MONTHS OF ARDENT LOVE-MAKING VIA THE U.S. MAIL TO CONVINCE THAT ONE, HUH, KING? WHAT WAS HER NAME? OH, YES...

HOWARD! SWEET...

EPHIE...MY DEAR...

'WE DIDN'T WASTE MUCH TIME WITH HER, EH, KING? SHE WASN'T AS WEALTHY AS WE THOUGHT! SOME-TIMES IT'S HARD TO TELL, ISN'T IT? AND YOU CAN'T VERY WELL ASK! HOW LONG DID EPHIE LAST BEFORE SHE FELL FROM HER APARTMENT WINDOW?...

YAAAAAHHH!

'THE FRESH-AIR-FIEND! HEH, HEH! IT WAS SO EASY TO PUSH HER! SHE HAD JEWELRY, THOUGH! HOW MUCH DID WE GET? FIVE GRAND OR SO, WASN'T IT?'

WE HATE TO SEE YOU GO, MR. PRINCE!

THE APARTMENT...WELL...IT'S SO BIG AND... EMPTY NOW!

NUMBER THREE ANSWERED OUR AD, EH, KING? SHE WAS THE WORST OF THE LOT! TWO HUNDRED POUNDS, AT LEAST! BUT SHE HAD THAT REAL ESTATE... OUT IN OKLAHOMA! SO...

HOWARD! DEAREST!

LUELLA, MY LOVE! CHOKED...

THAT JOB WAS THE CLEVEREST, THOUGH, I MUST ADMIT! REMEMBER? I MADE SURE TO LEAVE YOU HOME THAT DAY WE WENT DRIVING...

BE CAREFUL, HOWARD! THERE'S A SHARP DROP ON THIS TURN! YOU... YOU... HOWARD! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

GOOD-BYE, LUELLA!

I LEAPED FROM THE CAR JUST AS IT WENT OVER THE CLIFF! OH, YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE, KING! YOU'D HAVE BEEN PROUD OF ME! AND WHAT A SIGHT! THE CAR... GOING OVER AND OVER... DOWN... DOWN...



THAT REAL ESTATE BROUGHT US SEVENTY GRAND MUM, KING! YES! BUT THAT WAS A MISTAKE! SELLING IT! LATER, THEY FOUND OIL THERE! OF ALL THE LUCK! OH, WELL! WE MADE UP FOR IT ON NUMBER FOUR! REMEMBER HER?...?

HOWARD! MY DREAM...

VERONICA! YOU LOOK EVEN LOVELIER THAN YOUR PICTURE... GAG...



THE FACTORY THAT VERONICA'S FIRST HUSBAND HAD LEFT HER WAS WORTH A SMALL FORTUNE! CHEMICALS! IT SPELLED HER OWN UNDOING, EH, KING? REMEMBER HOW I LEARNED ABOUT THAT NON-TRACEABLE POISON?...?

HOWARD! THAT COFFEE! I... I... GASP...

YES, VERONICA! WHAT ABOUT IT?



POOR VERONICA! THE POISON MADE HER GO INTO SUCH PAINFUL CONVULSIONS BEFORE SHE DIED! BUT A HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS WASN'T HAY, WAS IT, KING?...

YOU'RE SURE YOU WANT TO SELL, MR. ROYAL? AFTER ALL...

YES, MR. BIBBS! I'D RATHER! I COULDN'T GO ON WITHOUT... HER!



HEH, HEH! HOW MANY WERE THERE ALL TOGETHER, KING? SEVEN? YES! SEVEN! WHY... WE COULD HAVE RETIRED EASILY WITH THE FORTUNE WE'D MADE FROM THEM! BUT THEN WE READ THIS ONE'S... JANET'S AD...

HEMM! LISTEN TO THIS, KING! 'LONELY WOMAN DESIRES CORRESPONDENCE WITH REFINED GENTLEMAN!'



'WE COULDN'T RESIST, COULD WE, KING? WE HAD TO WRITE! AND THEN HER ANSWER CAME...'



'DEAR MR. THRONE, YOUR LETTER ARRIVED TODAY, AND I READ IT WITH MUCH INTEREST! YOU SOUND VERY CULTURED AND WELL TRAVELED! I WOULD ENJOY CORRESPONDING WITH YOU! JANET LANE'

HOWARD PUT HIS PIPE DOWN AND SMILED 'HE SHUFFLED THROUGH A SHEAF OF PAPERS...



SO WE STARTED WRITING. EN, KING? LET'S SEE! HERE'S HER SECOND LETTER...

'DEAR HOWARD... IF I MAY BE SO SO BOLD,

I RESIDE IN A STURDILY BUILT STONE HOUSE. THE PROPERTY IS VERY LARGE... ALMOST TWELVE ACRES... AND VERY WELL KEPT! BUT FOR A WOMAN SUCH AS MYSELF, BEING ALONE AS I AM... WITHOUT ANYONE LIVING FOR MILES AROUND... LIFE CAN BE VERY HARD. YOUR LETTERS ARE A GREAT COMFORT



CAN'T YOU SEE HER, KING? THIS RAVISHING WOMAN LIVING ALONE ON THIS PALATIAL ESTATE IN A HUGE FIELDSTONE HOUSE! WHY... IT SOUNDS ALMOST TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE...



LISTEN TO THIS LETTER! 'MARBLE FLOORS... SAY! 'FURNISHED IN EXQUISITE TASTE'... 'HARD WOODS'... 'BRONZE TRIMS'... 'SATIN DRAPERIES'... 'STAINED GLASS WINDOWS'...



KING, M'BOY! I THINK IT'S TIME THAT YOU AND I WERE SETTLING DOWN! WE'RE NOT GETTING ANY YOUNGER, YOU KNOW! AND IF JANET...



HOWARD PICKED UP THE PHOTOGRAPH OF THE LOVELY WOMAN... ..IF JANET LOOKS LIKE THIS,

I THINK WE'VE FOUND THE RIGHT ONE, THIS TIME! WHY, YOU'LL HAVE THAT BIG ESTATE TO ROMP AROUND IN... WITH THE HAND-WROUGHT-IRON GATES! AND THE GARDENERS... AND TREES... FLOWERS... AND A BIG STONE HOUSE...



HOWARD PICKED UP A PEN...

I'M GOING TO *PROPOSE* TO HER, KING! SHE SPEAKS OF HOW LONELY SHE IS... AND SHE HAS MY PICTURE! MAYBE... MAYBE SHE'LL SAY 'YES'!



THREE DAYS LATER, JANET'S ANSWER CAME...

SHE'S ACCEPTED, KING! SHE'LL MARRY ME! OH, I WOULDN'T LET MYSELF HOPE... BUT NOW I'M SO HAPPY!



HOWARD PACKED HIS BAGS...

NO MORE WANDERING AROUND FOR US, BOY! NO MORE ALIASES... NO MORE FALSE LOVE-MAKING! WE'RE SETTLING DOWN... FOR GOOD...



HOWARD SENT A TELEGRAM ON AHEAD ANNOUNCING HIS EXPECTED ARRIVAL DATE, AND HE AND KING SET OUT BY CAR FOR JANET'S HOME...

ONLY FIFTY MORE MILES, BOY! WE'LL BE THERE BEFORE MIDNIGHT!



HOWARD CHECKED JANET'S ADDRESS WITH A POLICE-MAN IN THE TOWN...

BAYBERRY ROAD? WHY IT'S STRAIGHT ON SOUTH ABOUT TWO MILES! YOU CAN'T MISS IT! WHAT NUMBER WAS THAT?

THAT'S ALL RIGHT OFFICER! I'LL FIND IT! THANKS!



BAYBERRY ROAD WAS A LONG NARROW TREE-LINED LANE OFF THE MAIN HIGHWAY! THERE WERE FEW HOUSES ALONG IT! FINALLY...

THERE'S THE WROUGHT-IRON GATE, KING! WE'RE HERE!



AS HOWARD'S CAR SWUNG IN AT THE GATE, HIS HEADLIGHTS FELL ACROSS...

WHAT THE..?



THE LETTERS WERE RUSTED AND OLD, BUT *VERY* CLEAR...

A CEMETERY!



KING BEGAN TO WHINE SOFTLY...

STEADY, BOY! STEADY!
WE MUST HAVE MADE
A MISTAKE...



SUDDENLY, THE CAR DOOR SWUNG OPEN! KING YELPED...

GOOD LORD!



THE ROTTED, DECAYED THING GRINNED... REACHING OUTWARD! ITS FLESH CRAWLED WITH THE SLIME OF DEATH! ITS VOICE RASPED LIKE A WORN OUT GRAMAPHONE CYLINDER...

HOWARD... DA-A-ARLING!

JANET! GASP!

**NO!
NO!**



KING LEAPED FROM THE CAR, HOWLING! THE THING CLOSED ITS FLESH-TATTERED BONEY FINGERS AROUND HOWARD'S WRIST IN A VICE-LIKE GRIP AND DRAGGED HIM FROM THE CAR TOWARD THE OPEN MAUSOLEUM...

I'M SORRY I DIDN'T HAVE A MORE RECENT SNAPSHOT, MY DEAR! AREN'T THE GROUNDS JUST AS I DESCRIBED THEM?



THE FEMALE-THING DRAGGED THE SCREAMING MAN INTO THE SATIN DRAPED MAUSOLEUM WITH THE STAINED GLASS WINDOW... ACROSS THE MARBLE FLOOR AND INTO THE HARD-WOOD, BRONZE-TRIMMED COFFIN! AND ALL THE WHILE, AS IT CLOSED THE LID DOWN, IT KEPT MURMURING... SPEWING ITS FOUL-SMELLING BREATH UPON HIS TERROR-STRICKEN FACE...

IT'S BEEN SO LONELY
HERE... MY DEAR! BUT NOW...
THAT'S ALL OVER!



HEE, HEE! WHAT A LOVE AFFAIR, EH, KIDDIES? 'ALL OVER, NOW' IS RIGHT... FOR **HOWIE**, THAT IS! OH, BY THE WAY! IN CASE YOU'RE WONDERING WHAT HAPPENED TO **KING**, REST YOUR FIENDISH MINDS! JANET HAD A DOG... NAMED **QUEENIE**! AND NOW, IT'S TIME TO CLOSE THAT PUTRID CRYPT-KEEPER'S MAG! WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN THE VAULT-KEEPER'S MESS, THE VAULT OF HORROR! BYE, NOW! AND IF YOU GET ANY LOVE LETTERS SIGNED **JANET** OR **HOWIE**... HEE, HEE, WELL...



THE END

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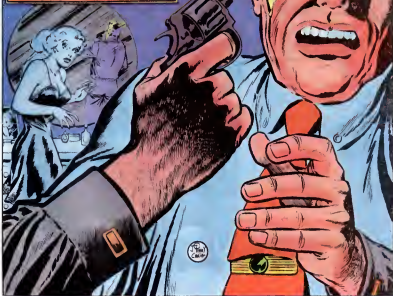
SUSPENSTORIES

IN THIS ISSUE:

E.C.'S ADAPTATION OF A STORY BY

RAY BRADBURY

AMERICA'S TOP HORROR WRITER!



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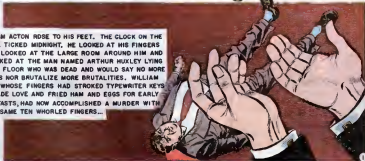
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TOUCH *and* GO!



WILLIAM ACTON ROSE TO HIS FEET. THE CLOCK ON THE MANTEL TICKED MIDNIGHT. HE LOOKED AT HIS FINGERS AND HE LOOKED AT THE LARGE ROOM AROUND HIM AND HE LOOKED AT THE MAN NAMED ARTHUR HUXLEY LYING ON THE FLOOR WHO WAS DEAD AND WOULD SAY NO MORE SAYINGS NOR BRUTALIZE MORE BRUTALITIES. WILLIAM ACTON, WHOSE FINGERS HAD STROKED TYPEWRITER KEYS AND MADE LOVE AND FRIED HAM AND EGGS FOR EARLY BREAKFASTS, HAD NOW ACCOMPLISHED A MURDER WITH THOSE SAME TEN WHORLED FINGERS...



NOW WHAT? HIS EVERY IMPULSE EXPLODED HIM IN A HYSTERIA TOWARD THE DOOR. GET OUT, GET AWAY, RUN, NEVER COME BACK, BOARD A TRAIN, GET A TAXI, GET, GO, RUN, WALK, SAUNTER, BUT GET THE BLAZES OUT OF HERE...



HIS HANDS HOVERED BEFORE HIS EYES, FLOATING, TURNING. IT WAS NOT THE HANDS AS HANDS HE WAS INTERESTED IN, NOR THE FINGERS AS FINGERS. HE FOUND INTEREST ONLY IN THE *TIPS* OF HIS FINGERS. THE CLOCK TICKED UPON THE MANTEL.



HE KNELT BY HUXLEY'S BODY, TOOK A HANKERCHIEF FROM HUXLEY'S POCKET AND BEGAN METHODICALLY TO SWAB HUXLEY'S THROAT WITH IT. HE BRUSHED AND MASSAGED THE FACE AND THE BACK OF THE NECK WITH A FIERCE ENERGY...



HE STOPPED. THERE WAS A MOMENT WHEN HE SAW THE ENTIRE HOUSE, THE HALLS, DOORS, FURNITURE; AND AS CLEARLY AS IF IT WERE BEING REPEATED WORD FOR WORD, HE HEARD HUXLEY TALKING AND HIMSELF TALKING JUST AS THEY HAD TALKED ONLY AN HOUR AGO...



HE HAD *TOUGHED* THE LIBRARY DOOR. HE HAD *TOUGHED* THE BOOKS AND THE LIBRARY TABLE AND *TOUGHED* THE BURGUNDY BOTTLE AND BURGUNDY GLASSES...



NOW, SQUATTING ON THE FLOOR BESIDE HUXLEY'S COLD BODY WITH THE POLISHING HANKERCHIEF IN HIS FINGERS, HE STARED AT THE HOUSE, THE WALLS, THE FURNITURE, STUNNED BY WHAT HE REALIZED. HE SHUT HIS EYES, WAGGING THE HANKERCHIEF IN HIS HANDS, BITING HIS LIPS WITH HIS TEETH, PULLING IN ON HIMSELF! THE FINGERPRINTS WERE EVERYWHERE!



A PAIR OF GLOVES. BEFORE HE DID ONE MORE THING, BEFORE HE POLISHED ANOTHER AREA, HE MUST HAVE A PAIR OF GLOVES. HE PUT HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS, WALKED TO THE HALL UMBRELLA STAND, THE HATRACK, HUXLEY'S OVERCOAT. HE PULLED OUT THE OVERCOAT POCKETS. NO GLOVES.



HIS HANDS IN HIS POCKETS AGAIN HE WALKED UPSTAIRS. HE UNTIED SEVENTY OR EIGHTY DRAWERS IN SIX UPSTAIRS ROOMS, LEFT THEM WITH TONGUES HANGING OUT. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE EIGHTY-FIFTH DRAWER HE FOUND GLOVES...

DOWN ONTO THE HARDWOOD FLOOR HAD DROPPED MR. HUXLEY, WITH WILLIAM ACTON AFTER HIM THEY HAD ROLLED AND TUSSELED AND CLAWED AT THE FLOOR PRINTING IT WITH THEIR FINGERTIPS!

GLOVED, WILLIAM ACTON RETURNED TO THE ROOM AND LABORIOUSLY BEGAN SWABBING EVERY INFESTED INCH OF THE FLOOR, INCH BY INCH, HE POLISHED TILL HE COULD MOST SEE HIS INTENT SWEATING FACE IN IT...



THEN HE CAME TO A TABLE AND POLISHED THE LEG OF IT, ITS SOLID BODY, AND ON TOP, AND HE CAME TO A BOWL OF WAX FRUIT AND HE PLUCKED OUT THE WAX FRUIT AND POLISHED THEM, LEAVING THE FRUIT AT THE BOTTOM UNPOLISHED.



AFTER RUBBING THE TABLE, HE CAME TO A PICTURE FRAME OVER IT



HE SHINED THE DOORKNOBS, CURRIED THE DOORS FROM HEAD TO FOOT. HE WENT TO ALL THE FURNITURE AND WIPED THE CHAIRS AND RUBBED THE FABRIC. FINGERPRINTS CAN BE FOUND ON FABRIC. HE WENT TO THE BODY, TURNED IT NOW THIS WAY, NOW THAT, AND BURNISHED EVERY SURFACE OF IT. HE EVEN SHINED THE SHOES, CHARGING NOTHING...



WHILE SHINING THE SHOES HIS FACE TOOK ON A LITTLE TREMOR OF WORRY, AND AFTER A MOMENT HE GOT UP AND WALKED OVER TO THAT TABLE. HE TOOK OUT AND POLISHED THE WAX FRUIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOWL...



HE WENT BACK TO THE BODY, BUT AS HE CROUCHED OVER IT, HIS EYELIDS TWICKED AND HIS JAW MOVED FROM SIDE TO SIDE AND HE DEBATED. THEN HE GOT UP AND WALKED ONCE MORE TO THE TABLE. HE POLISHED THE PICTURE FRAME...



WHILE POLISHING THE PICTURE FRAME HE DISCOVERED... *THE WALL!*



HUXLEY HAD GIVEN HIM A SHOVE AS THEY STRUGGLED. HE HAD FALLEN AGAINST ONE WALL, GOTTEN UP, TOUCHING THE WALL...



HE GLANCED AT THE FOUR WALLS...
RIDICULOUS.



FROM THE CORNERS OF HIS EYES HE SAW SOMETHING ON ONE WALL...

I REFUSE TO PAY ATTENTION. THE NEXT ROOM, NOW, I'LL BE METHODICAL. LET'S SEE, WE WERE IN THE HALL, THE LIBRARY, *THIS* ROOM, THE DINING ROOM AND THE KITCHEN.



THERE WAS A SPOT ON THE WALL BEHIND HIM...



WELL, *WASN'T* THERE?



HE TURNED, ANGRILY, AND HE WENT OVER AND HE COULDN'T FIND ANY SPOT. OH, A *LITTLE* ONE, YES, RIGHT. *THERE*. HE DABBED IT. IT WASN'T A FINGERPRINT ANYHOW!



HE LOOKED AT THE WALL AND THE WAY IT WENT OVER TO HIS RIGHT AND OVER TO HIS LEFT AND HOW IT WENT DOWN TO HIS FEET AND UP OVER HIS HEAD AND HE SAID SOFTLY...



BUT UNKNOWN TO HIS EYES, HIS GLOVED FINGERS MOVED IN A LITTLE RUBBING RHYTHM ON THE WALL.

HE PEERED AT HIS HAND AND THE WALLPAPER. HE LOOKED OVER HIS SHOULDER AT THE OTHER ROOM. HIS FACE HARDENED. WITHOUT A WORD HE BEGAN TO SCRUB THE WALL, UP AND DOWN, BACK AND FORTH, UP AND DOWN, AS HIGH AS HE COULD STRETCH AND AS LOW AS HE COULD BEND...



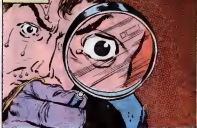
HE GOT ONE WALL FINISHED, AND THEN... HE CAME TO ANOTHER WALL. HE LOOKED AT THE MANTEL CLOCK. AN HOUR GONE. IT WAS FIVE AFTER ONE. HE TURNED AWAY FROM THIS NEW FRESH WALL...



FROM THE CORNERS OF HIS EYES HE SAW THE LITTLE WEBS. WHEN HIS BACK WAS TURNED THE LITTLE SPIDERS CAME OUT OF THE WOODWORK AND SPUN THEIR LITTLE FRAGILE HALF-INVISIBLE WEBS UPON THE THREE WALLS AS YET UNTOUCHED. EACH TIME HE STARED DIRECTLY AT THEM, THE SPIDERS POPPED BACK INTO THE WOOD-WORK ONLY TO SPINDLE OUT AS HE RETREATED...



HE WENT TO A WRITING DESK AT WHICH HUXLEY HAD BEEN SEATED EARLIER. HE OPENED A DRAWER AND TOOK OUT WHAT HE WAS LOOKING FOR. A LITTLE MAGNIFYING GLASS HUXLEY SOMETIMES USED FOR READING. HE TOOK THE MAGNIFIER AND APPROACHED THE WALL UNEASILY...



FINGERPRINTS!

BUT THOSE AREN'T *MINE*? I DIDN'T PUT THEM THERE! I'M SURE I DIDN'T! A SERVANT, A BUTLER, OR A MAID PERHAPS!



THE WALL WAS FULL OF THEM...

LOOK AT THIS ONE HERE, LONG AND TAPERED, A WOMAN'S, I'D BET ON IT!



WOULD YOU? I WOULD!

ARE YOU CERTAIN?

YES!

POSITIVE?

WELL... YES.

ABSOLUTELY?

YES, YES!

WIPE IT OUT, ANYWAY!

OK, ALL RIGHT!

IN A RAGE HE BEGAN TO SWEEP THE WALL UP AND DOWN AND BACK AND FORTH WITH HIS GLOVED HANDS, SWEATING, GRUNTING AND SWEARING, BENDING AND RISING AND GETTING REDDER OF FACE...



HE FINISHED THE WALL AT TWO O'CLOCK. HE TOOK OFF HIS COAT AND PUT IT ON A CHAIR. HE WALKED OVER TO THE BOWL AND TOOK OUT THE WAXED FRUIT AND POLISHED THE ONES AT THE BOTTOM AND POLISHED THE PICTURE FRAME. HE LOOKED UP AT THE CHANCELIER...



HE GOT A CHAIR AND BROUGHT IT OVER UNDER THE CHANCELIER AND PUT ONE FOOT UP ON IT AND TOOK IT DOWN AND THREW THE CHAIR, VIOLENTLY, LAUGHING, INTO A CORNER. THEN HE RAN FROM THE ROOM LEAVING ONE WALL AS YET UNWASHED.



NOW ACTON WIPED THE FORKS AND SPOONS AND TOOK DOWN ALL THE PLATES AND SPECIAL CERAMIC DISHES FROM THE WALL SHELF... REMEMBERING ALL THE TOUCHINGS AND GESTURING...



HIS FINGERS TWITCHED AT HIS SIDES. HIS MOUTH SLIPPED OPEN AND THE TONGUE MOVED ALONG HIS LIPS AND HE LOOKED AT THE CHANCELIER AND LOOKED AWAY AND LOOKED BACK AT THE CHANCELIER AND LOOKED AT HUXLEY'S BODY AND THEN AT THE CRYSTAL CHANCELIER WITH ITS LONG PEARLS OF RAINBOW GLASS.



IN THE DINING ROOM HE CAME TO A TABLE. HE PAUSED OVER THE TABLE WHERE THE BOXES OF CUTLERY WERE LAID OUT, HEARING ONCE MORE HUXLEY'S VOICE.

LOOK AT THIS SILVER, ACTON.
EXQUISITE CRAFTSMANSHIP.
LOOK AT IT!



HERE'S A LOVELY BIT OF CERAMICS BY GERTRUDE AND OTTO NATZLER, ACTON. ARE YOU FAMILIAR WITH THEIR WORK?



PICK IT UP. TURN IT OVER. SEE THE FINE THINNESS OF THE BOWL, THIN AS EGGSHELL. INCREDIBLE. HANDLE IT. GO AHEAD. I DON'T MIND.



HANDLE IT! GO AHEAD! PICK IT UP!

ACTION SOBBED UNEVENLY. HE HURLED THE POTTERY AGAINST THE WALL. IT SHATTERED AND SPREAD, FLAKING WILDLY, UPON THE FLOOR...



AN INSTANT LATER, HE WAS ON HIS KNEES. EVERY PIECE, EVERY SHARD OF IT, MUST BE REGAINED. FOOL, FOOL, FOOL, HE CRIED TO HIMSELF. FIND EVERY PIECE, YOU IDIOT... NOT ONE FRAGMENT OF IT MUST BE LEFT BEHIND. HE GATHERED THEM...



ARE THEY ALL HERE? HE LOOKED UNDER THE TABLE AGAIN AND UNDER THE CHAIRS AND FOUND ONE MORE PIECE BY MATCH-LIGHT AND STARTED TO POLISH EACH LITTLE FRAGMENT AS IF IT WERE A PRECIOUS STONE...



HE TOOK OUT THE LINEN AND WIPED IT AND WIPED THE CHAIRS AND TABLES AND DOORKNOBS AND WINDOW-PANES AND LEDGES AND DRAPE AND WIPED THE FLOOR AND FOUND THE KITCHEN, PANTING, BREATHING VIOLENTLY, AND TOOK OFF HIS VEST AND ADJUSTED HIS GLOVES AND WIPED THE GLITTERING CHROMIUM...



AND HE WIPED ALL THE UTENSILS AND THE SILVER FAUCETS AND THE MIXING BOWLS, FOR NOW HE HAD FORGOTTEN WHAT HE HAD TOUCHED AND WHAT HE HAD NOT. HUXLEY AND HE HAD LINGERED HERE, IN THE KITCHEN, THEY HAD IDLED, TOUCHED THIS, THAT, SOMETHING ELSE, THERE WAS NO REMEMBERING WHAT OR HOW MUCH OR HOW MANY...



AND HE FINISHED THE KITCHEN AND CAME THROUGH THE HALL INTO THE ROOM WHERE HUXLEY LAY. HE GRIED OUT. HE HAD FORGOTTEN TO WASH THE FOURTH WALL OF THE ROOM. AND WHILE HE WAS GONE, THE LITTLE SPIDERS HAD COME OUT OF THE FOURTH UNWASHED WALL AND SWARMED OVER THE ALREADY CLEAN WALLS, DIRTYING THEM AGAIN! ON THE CEILING, THE CHANDELIER, IN THE CORNERS, ON THE FLOOR A MILLION LITTLE WHORLED WEBB HUNG BILLOWING AT HIS SCREAM...



TINY, TINY LITTLE WEBB, NO BIGGER THAN, IRONICALLY YOUR... FINGER! AS HE WATCHED, THE WEBB WERE WOVEN OVER THE PICTURE FRAME, THE FRUIT BOWL, THE BODY, THE FLOOR. PRINTS WIELDED THE PAPER KNIFE, PULLED OUT DRAWERS, TOUCHED THE TABLETOP... TOUCHED, TOUCHED, TOUCHED EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE...



HE POLISHED THE FLOOR WILDLY, WILDLY. HE ROLLED THE BODY OVER AND CRIED ON IT WHILE HE WASHED IT AND GOT UP AND WALKED OVER AND POLISHED THE FRUIT AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOWL. HE PUT A CHAIR UNDER THE CHANDELIER AND GOT UP AND POLISHED EACH LITTLE HANGING FIRE OF IT, SHAKING IT LIKE A CRYSTAL TAMBOURINE UNTIL IT TILTED BELLWISE IN THE AIR, THEN HE LEAPED OFF THE CHAIR AND GRIPPED THE DOORKNOBS AND GOT UP ON ANOTHER CHAIR AND SWABBED THE WALLS HIGHER AND HIGHER AND RAN TO THE KITCHEN AND GOT A BROOM AND WIPED THE WEBS DOWN FROM THE CEILINGS AND POLISHED THE BOTTOM FRUIT OF THE BOWL AND WASHED THE BODY AND DOORKNOBS AND SILVERWARE AND FOUND THE HALL BANISTER AND FOLLOWED THE BANISTER UPSTAIRS...



THREE O'CLOCK! THERE WERE TWELVE HOOMS DOWNSTAIRS AND EIGHT ABOVE, ONE HUNDRED CHAINS, SIX SOFAS, TWENTY-SEVEN TABLES, SIX RADIOS, AND UNDER AND ON TOP AND BEHIND. HE YANKED FURNITURE OUT AWAY FROM WALLS AND, SOBBING, WIPED THEM CLEAN OF YEARS-OLD DUST, HANDLING, ERASING, NUBBING, POLISHING, AND NOW IT WAS FOUR O'CLOCK! AND HIS ARMS ACHED AND HIS EYES WERE SWOLLEN AND STARING AND HE MOVED SLUGGISHLY ABOUT, ON STRANGE LEGS, HIS HEAD DOWN, HIS ARMS MOVING, SWABBING AND NUBBING, BEDROOM BY BEDROOM, CLOSET BY CLOSET...



THEY FOUND HIM AT SIX-THIRTY THAT MORNING, IN THE ATTIC, THE ENTIRE HOUSE WAS POLISHED TO A BRILLIANCE, THEY FOUND HIM IN THE ATTIC, POLISHING OLD TRUNKS AND OLD FRAMES AND OLD CHAIRS AND TOYS AND VASES AND ROCKING HORSES AND DUSTY CIVIL WAR COINS. HE WAS HALF THROUGH THE ATTIC WHEN THE POLICE OFFICER WALKED UP BEHIND HIM WITH A GUN...



ON THE WAY OUT OF THE HOUSE, ACTON POLISHED THE FRONT DOORKNOB WITH HIS HANDKERCHIEF, AND SLAMMED IT IN TRIUMPH!



ONE FOR THE MONEY...

ANITA STOOD BEFORE THE HUGE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT WINDOWS, STARING OUT AT THE SPRAWLING CITY BELOW HER. HER FACE WAS A SCULPTURED MASK... COLD AND EXPRESSIONLESS. AS SHE LISTENED, SHE PUFFED ON HER GOLD CIGARETTE HOLDER, SUCKING THE SMOKE IN AND BLOWING IT OUT THROUGH HEAVILY PAINTED LIPS. THE LIGHT FROM A NEARBY LAMP RIPPLED OVER HER SHEER NEGLIGEE, ACCENTING HER CURVACIOUS FIGURE. BEHIND HER, RONALD'S BROKEN VOICE DRONED ON...

I... I GUESS I BLEED THE BUSINESS DRY, ANITA! THEY CAME WITH THEIR BOOKS AND THEIR LONG LIST OF FIGURES AND THEY SHOWED ME THAT I'D PUSHED THE COMPANY INTO BANKRUPTCY!

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU'RE BROKE, RONALD! YOUR DOUGH'S RUN OUT! IS THAT RIGHT?



Jack Kamen

HE WAS AN OLDISH MAN, GREYING AT THE TEMPLES. HIS FACE WAS POUGHY AND LINED. HIS EYES WERE DIM AND BLOODSHOT, HE NEEDED...

THAT'S ABOUT IT, ANITA BABY! I SPENT IT ALL ON YOU! I PUT YOU UP IN THIS BEAUTIFUL PENTHOUSE... BOUGHT YOU CLOTHES... JEWELRY...

THEN THIS IS IT! THE WIND-UP! THE FINISH!



RONALD STARED AT ANITA. HIS MOUTH FELL OPEN...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, MONEY? THIS ISN'T THE END AT ALL! I CAN GET A JOB. THINGS WILL BE TIGHT FOR A FEW YEARS, BUT WE'LL HAVE EACH OTHER!

HAH! DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH, RONALD! IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO GIVE UP ALL THIS... AND MOVE BACK DOWN THERE... TO THE RAT-HOLES...





BUT I CAN'T AFFORD THIS PLACE NOW, ANITA! I...

THEN I'LL FIND SOMEBODY WHO CAN AFFORD IT!

ANITA! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? WE... LOVE EACH OTHER!

I NEVER LOVED YOU, YOU CHUMP! I LOVED THIS... THE DOUGH! NOW THAT THE DOUGH'S RUN OUT, I'LL FIND ME ANOTHER SUCKER!

ANITA! MY GOD! YOU... YOU MADE ME DIVORCE HELEN! YOU PROMISED YOU'D MARRY ME...

IT WAS ALL IN THE GAME, BUSTER! NOW WHY DON'T YOU RUN ALONG? HUH?

HE STOOD UP, HIS TONGUE CURLED ACROSS DRY LIPS. HE LOOKED AT HER WITH WET EYES. SHE TURNED AWAY, GAZED OUT OF THE WINDOW, AND SUCKED ON HER CIGARETTE...

I'LL... I'LL GET MY THINGS... FROM THE... DRAWER!

SUIT YOURSELF! ONLY MAKE IT SNAPPY, HUH? I WANT TO GET DRESSED!



HE STUMBLER ACROSS THE LUXURIOUS LIVING ROOM INTO THE BEDROOM AND SLAMMED THE DOOR. SHE CURSED HIM UNDER HER BREATH. NEXT TIME SHE'D BE A LITTLE MORE CAREFUL WHOM SHE PICKED. SUDDENLY...



THE GOLD CIGARETTE HOLDER DROPPED FROM HER MOUTH. SHE DARTED TO THE BEDROOM DOOR AND FLUNG IT OPEN. THE ACID SMELL OF GUNPOWDER FILLED THE ROOM. A TINY WHISP OF SMOKE CURLED UP FROM THE MUZZLE OF THE .45 HE HELD IN HIS HAND. HE SAT ON THE BED, STARING AT HER WITH BLIND EYES. BLOOD TRICKLING FROM THE HOLE IN HIS TEMPLE...

RONALD! CHOKE...



AND THEN HE PITCHED FORWARD, SPRAWLING OFF THE BED ONTO THE FLOOR AT HER FEET. HE WAS DEAD! SHE LOOKED DOWN AT HIM AND SMIRKED...

SUCKER...



IT WAS HER OLD STAMPING GROUND. IT HAD PAID OFF BEFORE. IT COULD PAY OFF AGAIN. ANITA SAT AT THE BAR, NURSING HER DRINK, IGNORING THE BARTENDER'S DIRTY LOOKS. IT WAS HERE THAT SHE'D FIRST 'MET' RONALD. NOW RONALD WAS DEAD. ANITA'S MEAL TICKET HAD BEEN ALL PUNCHED OUT. SHE HAD TO FIND ANOTHER



ANITA WAS JUST ABOUT READY TO GIVE UP IN DISGUST WHEN THE OLD WOMAN CAME IN. SHE LOOKED AROUND SELF-CONSCIOUSLY AND SAT DOWN AT A BOOTH. SHE LOOKED ABOUT SIXTY... TIMID AND SHY. NOT THE TYPE ONE WOULD EXPECT TO FIND IN AN ESTABLISHMENT LIKE THAT.



ANITA STUDIED HER. SHE WAS WELL DRESSED. SHE WORE A LARGE DIAMOND RING ON ONE HAND AND A SPARKLING BRACELET ON HER WRIST. WHEN THE BARTENDER SERVED THE LEMONADE, SHE OPENED HER BAG AND TOOK OUT A WALLET FILLED WITH GREEN BILLS...



ANITA GASPED. THIS OLD BAT WAS LOADED. WHAT WAS SHE DOING IN A JOINT LIKE THIS? ANITA SLIPPED OFF HER BAR STOOL AND APPROACHED HER.



ANITA SLID ONTO THE BOOTH BENCH OPPOSITE THE OLD WOMAN...



ANITA SMILED... ALL RIGHT... HARRIET! SAY, WHAT'S A WOMAN LIKE YOU DOING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS... ANYWAY?



ANITA THOUGHT OF MRS. WALKER'S THICK WALLET CRAMMED WITH BIG BILLS...





ERIC? MY SON! BUT I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT IT. TELL ME ABOUT YOU, MY CHILD!



NOTHING TO TELL, HARRIET! I'M JUST A LONELY GIRL MYSELF! YOU'RE A VERY LOVELY GIRL, ANITA! THERE'S NO REASON FOR YOU TO BE LONELY!



YOU'RE VERY KIND, HARRIET! BUT, WELL... I NEVER MET THE RIGHT MAN, I GUESS! YOU WOULD HAVE LIKED ERIC SIX YEARS AGO! HE...



YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK ABOUT IT IF YOU DON'T WANT TO, HARRIET!

WHAT DO YOU DO, ANITA? I MEAN... FOR A LIVING?



WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT I'M UNEMPLOYED AT THE PRESENT TIME! MY LAST... EMPLOYER RECENTLY WENT BROKE AND I LOST MY... POSITION!

OH! THAT'S TOO BAD! I'M SORRY! WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS?

ANITA'S PLANS? WHY THEY WERE FORMING... RIGHT NOW! THIS OLD BAG WITH THE THICK BANKROLL! WHY NOT? WHY TRY TO DISGUISE SOME FAT OLD RICH GUY WHO'LL TAKE EVERYTHING HE CAN GET, WHEN THE OLD GAL COULD BE SUCH EASY PICKINGS...



PLANS? WHY... GET ANOTHER JOB IF I CAN. MY MONEY'S RUNNING OUT!

WOULD YOU THINK IT PRESUMPTUOUS OF AN OLD WOMAN IF I SUGGESTED SOMETHING, ANITA?



W-NOT SO RIGHT AHEAD!

I LIKE YOU, ANITA! YOU SEEM LIKE A NICE GIRL! I'M LONELY AND I HAVE MONEY! HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME MY PAID COMPANION? LIVE WITH ME?...

WHAT A CHANCE! THE PENTHOUSE APARTMENT WAS GONE! ANITA'D ALREADY DECIDED TO TRY AND MILK THE OLD GAL, AND NOW HERE SHE WAS... ASKING FOR IT! ASKING ANITA TO COME AND LIVE WITH HER! WHAT A CHANCE...

A PAID COMPANION! LIVE WITH YOU! BUT...

I'D MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE, ANITA! AND HAVING YOU AROUND WOULD MAKE ME SO HAPPY!

ALL RIGHT, HARRIET! IT SOUNDS WONDERFUL! I'LL TAKE THE JOB!

GOOD! WHEN CAN YOU START?

IT WAS GOING TO BE SO EASY! LIKE TAKING CANDY FROM A BABY! SHE'D GO AND LIVE WITH THE OLD WOMAN, WORK INTO HER GOOD GRACES, AND END UP WITH ALL HER DOUGH...

WHY, RIGHT NOW! I'LL GET MY THINGS! I LIVE IN THE HOTEL UP THE BLOCK!

GOOD! I'LL WAIT HERE! HERE'S SOME MONEY TO PAY YOUR BILL!

ANITA TOOK THE FIFTY! SHE HURRIED TO HER HOTEL ROOM! SO EASY! SO VERY EASY...

I'M CHECKING OUT! WHAT DO I OWE...

THAT'LL BE THIRTY-TWO FIFTY, MISS SHELBY! ANY... FORWARDING ADDRESS?

I'LL LET YOU KNOW! SO LONG!

GOOD-BYE, MISS SHELBY! GOOD LUCK!

GOOD LUCK?! YES, ANITA WAS HAVING GOOD LUCK! THIS TIME THERE'D BE NO PAWING CIGAR-SMOKING MALE TO TOLERATE AND PLEASE. YES, THIS WAS LUCK...

OKAY, HARRIET! LET'S GO!

COME, MY DEAR! I HAVE A CAB WAITING!

HARRIET GAVE THE CAR DRIVER THE ADDRESS. IT WAS OVER ON THE SWANK EAST SIDE. ANITA SAT BACK AND SMILED...

WHY... YOU'RE SMILING, ANITA!

I WAS JUST THINKING HOW LUCKY I AM, HARRIET!

THE TRIP TOOK SOME TIME. CROSSTOWN TRAFFIC WAS SLOW. ANITA FOUND A GOOD OPENING AND BEGAN TO PRY...

YOUR HUSBAND MUST HAVE LEFT YOU VERY WELL OFF, THEN!

HE MADE A GREAT DEAL OF MONEY! WE HAD EVERYTHING! WHEN HE DIED, HE LEFT US ALMOST HALF A MILLION!

USPOH! ERIC...

YES, ERIC! ERIC WAS FIFTEEN WHEN MY HUSBAND DIED! MY, HOW I SPOILED THE BOY! HE GOT EVERYTHING HE WANTED! EVERYTHING! AND THEN, SIX YEARS AGO...

THE CAB STOPPED

IS THIS IT?

EH? OH! YES, MY DEAR! HOW MUCH WILL THAT BE, DRIVER?

IT WAS ONE OF THOSE FAST-DISAPPEARING EAST-SIDE MANSIONS SET BACK IN THE SHADOWS OF THE TOWERING APARTMENT HOUSES THAT HAD SPRUNG UP AROUND IT. THEY CLIMBED THE STEPS...

IT'S BEAUTIFUL, HARRIET!

NOT ANY MORE! IT USED TO BE BEAUTIFUL, BUT NOT ANY MORE!

THE OLD WOMAN FUMBLING IN HER PURSE FOR HER KEY! HER DIAMOND RING SPARKLED! ANITA STARED AT IT! SOMEDAY THAT RING WAS GOING TO BE HER! SHE FELT HER FACE FLUSH...

AH! HERE WE ARE! THERE!

THEN... THEN YOU'RE ALL ALONE IN THE WORLD NOW, HARRIET?

THE HUGE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT BEHIND THEM. THEY STOOD IN THE SHADOWED MARBLE FOYER. ANITA HEARD THE LOCK SNAP INTO PLACE.

ALL ALONE? OH, NO! WHY, THERE'S ME... AND ERIC!

ERIC? BUT I THOUGHT YOU SAID HE DIED SIX YEARS AGO!

SOMETHING MOVED IN THE DARKNESS BEYOND THE FOYER. SOMETHING DRAGGED ITSELF TOWARD THEM...

I SAID I LOST ERIC, ANITA! I DIDN'T SAY HE DIED!

MOTHER? IS... THAT... YOU?

HE CAME OUT OF THE SHADOWS! HE WAS HUGE AND UGLY! HIS HAIR HUNG OVER HIS PERSPIRED BROW. HIS MASSIVE ARMS HUNG AT HIS SIDES. HIS EYES BURNED LIKE WHITE-HOT COALS AND A DROP OF SPITTLE OZZED FROM HIS MOUTH AND DOWN HIS UNSHAVEN CHIN...

THIS IS ERIC, MY DEAR! SIX YEARS AGO HE WAS A NORMAL TWENTY-FOUR YEAR OLD WITH EVERYTHING TO LIVE FOR! AND THEN HE FELL IN LOVE... FELL IN LOVE WITH A WOMAN WHO WANTED HIM ONLY FOR HIS MONEY...

CHOKED... YOU... YOU BROUGHT HER. MOTHER!

HE MOVED TOWARD ANITA...

HER NAME WAS NORMA! SHE USED HER LOVELY BODY TO LURE HIM TO BREAK HIS HEART! HE HAD A MENTAL BREAKDOWN! WENT COMPLETELY MAD...

NORMA! NO! NO! NORMA...

AND SO, EVERY YEAR ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF ERIC'S 'LOSS', I HAVE TO BRING HIM A BEAUTIFUL GIRL LIKE NORMA SO THAT HE CAN HAVE HIS REVENGE...

NORMA! DON'T TOUGH ME!

...SO THAT HE CAN MUTILATE HER BODY THE WAY NORMA MUTILATED HIS MIND!

NO! NO! OH, LORD!

AND TODAY I'VE BROUGHT HIM YOU!

THE END

The CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Welcome, horror and suspensory fanatics, to the first of my newly reinstated columns. After being locked up in the *Crypt of Terror* for the last thirty-five years, it feels good to stretch my legs again. (No, V.K.! Not on your new rack! Chee...)

Anyways...I notice, to my chagrin, that no one has written to me in, well, a L-O-O-ONG time. So you know what I'm going to do? (What's that? Entertain you with a brand new story, you say? NAW! That'd be too much like WORK.) I'm gonna cop out and dig up some of my old letters and run 'em again. Sorta give you an idea of what the fans thought of me in the bad old days. After all, if you like my stories about mouldy old corpses, you oughta love these mouldy old letters.

For this issue's offering, I thought I'd share with you what my original readers thought about the copy of *Tales From the Crypt* you just enjoyed. And after you've read their thoughts, why don't you wrack your fevered il'l brains and come up with some comments of your own? Let me know what you latter-day unleashed fiends think of my fright rag. Now, on with the letters:

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

Your origin story, "Lower Berth," was tops in nausea. So THAT'S where you came from! WOW! How horrible can you get?

Stuart Glass
Lynbrook, N.Y.

...I almost chewed my claws off reading "Lower Berth."

Nidred, the Were-cat
Salisbury, N.C.

...In the title, "Lower Berth," didn't you mean to spell the second word "Birth"?

Astute Observer
Bloomington, Ind.

No, Astute, I didn't mean to spell "Berth" "Birth"...but I wanted "Berth" to mean "Birth"...get what I mean? I mean...*(OH, SHUT UP! Get on with the column, if you know what WE meant—ed.)* Ooooooh, you're so mean! *(That's what we meant—ed.)*

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I'm getting a big kick out of those Grim Fairy Tales. "The Funeral" was the greatest!

Dick Mandel
Boston, Mass.

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I'm thoroughly convinced that E.C. magazines are of the highest quality money can buy. There is not another comic on the stands today that can compare, even in part, with the high standards maintained by your magazine. Being a fifth year art student, I am constantly critical of comic art, and in my estimation, the artwork in your books rates supreme.

Roger A. Nippres
Bridgeport, Mich.

...I would go over Niagara Falls WITHOUT a barrel for an E.C. magazine.

Fred Barth
Peoria, Ill.

How touching. I tell you, when I think of my delightfully deranged fan(atic)s of yore, I get fears in my eyes!

And now, here's some original commentary on this issue's Crime Suspensories offering:

Dear Editors,

In Crime Suspensories No. 17, I especially enjoyed the way you intermingled the two narratives. ONE FOR THE MONEY, and TWO FOR THE SHOW. As usual, not knowing what to expect till the ending of the latter, I was completely taken by surprise. I sincerely hope that you'll pull a switch like that again.

David S. Spiel
Milton, Mass.

...I've read many a different, cunning, and interesting story in your mags, but those two just about top them all...

Allan Katz
Kew Gardens, L.I.

...I fear, gentlemen, you have made a mistake. Mother always sends their bodies to Kalamazoo...not Peoria. Oh, goodie! She's brought me another surprise! So if you'll excuse me...NORMA! NORMA!

Art "Eric" Walker
Binghamton, N.Y.

Dear Editors,

I would jump off the Empire State Building for an E.C. magazine.

John Reid
Hollywood, Calif.

We suppose you expect US to pay your plane fare *seel!* But seriously, John...don't jump off the Empire State Building...jump on your newsdealer! He'll be glad to sell you an E.C.

Dear Editors,

I just don't know what to say. I wonder how you can keep on publishing such good stories. I'm afraid you're going to run out. If you do, I'll just stop reading comics. Because E.C. are THE ONLY comics!

G. W. Sheridan
Gainesville, Ga.

Ah, memories! And I fully expect to collect a whole batch of new ones from you modern, 1990s kinda readers. So find yourselves a cozy, clammy nook, pick up your poison pens, and WRITE already!

For the second part of this month's putrid ramblings, I'd like to acquaint and resacquaint you beady-eyed perusers with the part of my column that's always been nearest my tender old heart. (That's it...up there on the shelf in the meat tenderizer! Gettin' tenderer every day!) I'm referring to the section wherein I used to list the titles of popular songs, movies and whatever of the day...but titles that my readers had, heh heh, transmogrified with a scream-theme in mind. Here are some examples, starting with these horrific song titles:

BEAUTIFUL, BEAUTIFUL GROUND EYES
AFTER THE MAUL IS OVER
I BELIEVE (THAT FOR EVERY DROP OF BLOOD
THAT FALLS, A VAMPIRE GROWS)
WITH A TONG IN MY HEART
I'M SLITTING BY THE WINDOW (WATCHING THE
BLOOD-DROPS FALL)
THE SQUEAL OF TORTURE
I'M WINGING WITH SPEARS IN MY THIGHS
RATTLE HYMN OF THE REPULSIVE
ON THE TAINTED SIDE OF THE MEAT
WHO'S GORY NOW?
DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEX
YOU'D BE SO NICE TO COME GROAN TO
THE GIRL THAT I BURY
SEND ME ONE DOZEN NOSES
JUNE IS GUSHING OUT ALL OVER
HAVE I TOLD YOU LATELY THAT I LOATHE YOU?
GHOULS RUSH IN WHEN HUMAN BEINGS ARE
DEAD
LET'S HAVE ANOTHER CUT OF COFFIN, (AND
LET'S HAVE ANOTHER PIECE OF EYE)
RED LIVER VALLEY
DON'T LET THE BLOOD GET IN YOUR EYES
(DON'T LET THE CRUD CAKE IN YOUR
HEART)
I'M BACK IN THE COFFIN AGAIN (OUT WHERE
A FIEND IS A FIEND)
STAKE ME OUT IN THE BALL PARK

These additions to our LURID LITERATURE LIBRARY
were sent along by Jimmy Crow of Dallas, Texas;
Jimmy Teel of Pineville, W. Va.; and Drury Moroz of
Springfield, Ill.:

SQUISH FAMILY ROBINSON
WITHERING SIGHTS
HOW GREEN WAS MY SALLY
THE LASH OF THE MOHICANS
THE GIZZARD OF OOZE
ROMEO...THE GHOUL HE ET!
LORNA'S DOOM

Derrel Gould of Grand Lake Stream, Maine and Sue
Campbell and Amelia Alexander of Waynesville, N.C.
came up with these MORBID MOVIES:

A STREETCAR MAIMED MY SIRE
THE AFRICAN'S SPLEEN
HIGH STREWN
THE GREATEST CHOKE ON EARTH
WRING SOLOMON'S SPINE

So, now that you've read all this dire doggerel, maybe you're feeling inclined to come up with some of your own loathsome titles. If so, the Vault-Keeper, the Old Witch, and I would love to see 'em...so send 'em on in...but keep in mind that us coots are now more than 100 years old and we haven't been let out of our tombs lately—so we're not hep to some of this modern trash you kids call entertainment. So let us know what the real titles are, okay?

Send your song, movie and book titles, your poems and lyrics, your proverbs and (thought I'd forgotten, didn't you?) your letters of comment to me:

Here are some poems, the first by Michael Britekant of N.Y.C.:

*Little Miss Muffet sat on her tuffet,
Watching the ghouls at play
When along came a vampire end sat
down beside her
And sucked all her blood away*

And this one from Michael Graziano of Babylon, L.I.:

*When I was young, I killed four people
And hid them in an old church steeple
I'd seen them sleeping in their beds,
Raised my hammer, and smashed their heads.
When their bodies were found in the church,
The police started a nine-state search
That was back in May of '43
But they never have located me
(The reason that I beat the law
Is that I died a year before!)*

Leonice Beer submitted this one:

*Down by the old mill stream
Where I first clawed you
You were sixteen
You let out a scream
You'll never be seventeen...*

A chap by the name of "Unsigned" from Chicago composed:

*A vampire took me home one night
To drink some blood and dine...
But it came as quite a shock to learn
The blood we drank was mine!*

And finally, a suggestion for a new department...PUTRID PROVERBS...was submitted by Herbert Telesch, along with a few inspiring thought-provokers:

*There's no ghoul like an old ghoul.
Vampires who live in glass coffins shouldn't throw
stakes.
Never put off till tomorrow who you can drain
today.
Don't count your pickin's before they're
hatched.
Late to rise and late to bed, means you're a
vampire and ought to be dead.
A stitch in time saves blood.
One man's person is another man's meat.*

The Crypt-Keeper
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FIRED!

PATRICIA GIBSON, OWNER OF THE GIRGLE-DIAMOND, OPENED THE DOOR OF THE RANCH HOUSE IN ANSWER TO THE HEAVY KNOCK. ROY WILLIS, ONE OF THE HIRED HANDS, STOOD OUTSIDE ON THE PORCH, HAT IN HAND...



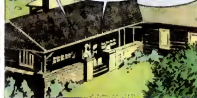
WHY, ROY? WHY AREN'T YOU OUT ON THE RANGE WITH THE BOYS?

I WANTED TO SPEAK TO YOU, MA'AM! MAY I... COME IN?

HE WAS TALL AND BROAD-SHOULDERED, AND HIS WINDSWEEPED BLACK HAIR FELL IN A DUKLED SHOCK OVER HIS PERSPIRING BROW. HE AMBLED TOWARD PATRICIA, HIS EYES TRAVELING OVER HER...

OF COURSE, ROY! COME IN! WHAT IS IT?

I BEEN MEANIN' TO SPEAK TO YOU FOR *SOME TIME*, MA'AM! THIS *MORNIN'* WHEN I NOTICED YOU *LOOKIN'* AT ME, I MADE UP MY MIND THAT IT WAS *TIME*!



PATRICIA LOOKED AWAY. SHE STEPPED ASIDE, ALLOWING ROY TO PASS HER...



I DIDN'T MEAN TO STARE AT YOU LIKE THAT, ROY! I'M SORRY...

I'M NOT, MA'AM! I WAS *HOPING*... WELL, THAT I WASN'T *MISTAKEN* ABOUT WHAT I *SAW* IN YOUR EYES, THIS *MORNIN'*!

HE STOOD OVER HER. SHE TURNED TO HIM...

WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU SAW, ROY?

I... I THOUGHT IT WAS THE LOOK OF A WOMAN WHO WANTED A MAN REAL BAD, NA'AM! THIS MAN...

SHE STARED AT THE FLOOR, HER FACE FLUSHING. ROY MOVED CLOSER...

THAT'S A RATHER BRAZEN THOUGHT, ROY!

TELL ME IT ISN'T TRUE, AND I'LL GO, NA'AM!

HIS BIG HANDS WERE ON HER ARMS NOW. HE HELD HER, LOOKING INTO HER EYES...

WHAT IF I TOLD YOU IT WERE TRUE, ROY? THAT I'VE LOOKED AT YOU EVERY DAY SINCE YOU CAME TO THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND. AND WANTED YOU! WHAT WOULD IT MEAN TO YOU?

PAT! WE'VE BEEN SUCH FOOLS! WE'VE WASTED SO MUCH TIME!

AND NOW HIS ARMS WERE AROUND HER, PULLING HER TOWARD HIM...

ROY! DARLINS...

PAT...

OUTSIDE THE RANCH HOUSE, ROY'S HORSE WHINNIED AND PAWED THE GROUND. FAR AWAY, A CALF'S GRY OF PAIN DRIFTED ACROSS THE STILL AIR. IN THE RANCH HOUSE, ROY STOOD UP. PAT LOOKED UP AT HIM FROM THE SOFA...

I GOTTA GO, PAT! THE BOYS ARE WAITIN' ON ME OUT THERE! THEY GOT SOME CALVES TIED AND READY FOR BRANDIN'!

DON'T GO, ROY! THE BOYS CAN WAIT. STAY HERE FOR AWHILE...

ROY SHOOK HIS HEAD...

CAN'T, PAT! IT AIN'T FAIR! NOW, IF I WERE FOREMAN HERE... RUNNIN' THE SHOW... I COULD DO AS I PLEASE! I COULD STAY IF I WANTED TO!

IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT, ROY? TO BE FOREMAN OF THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND?

ROY NODDED AND SAT DOWN. PAT PUT HER GHEEK AGAINST HIS LIPS...

IF IT'LL MAKE YOU HAPPY, ROY, THE JOB IS YOURS! ALL I ASK IS... YOU KEEP ME HAPPY... IN RETURN!

IT'LL BE A PLEASURE, PAT! A REAL PLEASURE...

THE SUMMER WANED AND ROUND-UP TIME CAME TO THE CIRCLE-DIAMOND. THE STEERS WERE HERDED AND DRIVEN FROM THE GRAZING LANDS TO THE CORRALS...



THE CATTLE DESTINED FOR THE SLAUGHTER HOUSES WERE SEPARATED FROM THE REST OF THE HERD AND DRIVEN EASTWARD. THE YOUNG CALVES BORN OUT ON THE RANGE WERE BRANDED...



AND THEN WINTER MOVED IN... BLEAK AND COLD. AROUND THE POT-BELLIED STOVE IN THE BUNKHOUSE, THE HANDS WOULD GATHER EACH EVENING...



AND ALL THROUGH THE LONG WINTER... NICE HERE BY THE FIRE, HUH, ROY? YEAH! COZY...



BUT LONG WINTERS MEAN MORE THAN JUST COLD WEATHER. LONG WINTERS MEAN BOREDOM...



N-NO! YOU CAN GO INTO TOWN WHENEVER YOU WANT! ANYTHING WRONG?
JUST WANT A CHANGE OF SCENE, THAT'S ALL! I'M TAKIN' THE CAR!



ALL RIGHT, ROY! I'LL WAIT UP FOR YOU! DON'T BOTHER!



ROY SPED OFF AND PAT WATCHED THE YELLOW CLOUD OF DUST DISAPPEAR INTO THE GATHERING TWILIGHT, HER EYES FILLING WITH TEARS. THAT NIGHT, IN TOWN ...



SHE WAS PAINTED AND CHEAP-LOOKING... THE TYPE THAT COULD RELIEVE BOREDOM...



ROY'S TRIPS TO TOWN THAT WINTER BECAME MORE AND MORE FREQUENT. HE SAW LESS AND LESS OF PAT ...



AND HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH AMY BECAME WARMER AND WARMER...



AND THEN, ONE NIGHT, IN A ROOM OVER THE SALOON WHERE AMY WORKED...

ROY, MONEY! WHEN ARE WE GOIN' TO GET MARRIED? YOU BEEN PROMISIN'!

SOON, BABY! SOON...

SO...



IT WAS PAT. SHE'D FOLLOWED ROY TO TOWN. SHE STOOD IN THE DOORWAY, HER EYES BLAZING...

SO THIS IS HOW YOU'VE BEEN SPENDING YOUR NIGHTS IN TOWN!

PAT! YOU GOT A NERVE BUSTIN' IN HERE LIKE THIS! GET OUT!

WHO'S SHE, ROY?



PATRICIA GIBSON'S MY NAME, HONEY. DIDN'T ROY TELL YOU ABOUT ME?

GET OUT, PAT! I'LL SEE YOU WHEN I GET BACK TO THE RANCH!

WHAT ABOUT HER, ROY?

TELL HER, ROY! TELL HER ABOUT US!

I SAID GET OUT, PAT!

I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU HAD NO TIES, ROY!

HAN! THAT'S A LAUGH! HE'S ALL MINE, HONEY... AND NOBODY'S TAKIN' HIM AWAY FROM ME...

SHE'S CRAZY, ANY!

YOU'D BETTER LEAVE, AND YOU CAN TAKE HIM WITH YOU!



AMY SLAMMED THE DOOR, ROY AND PAT STOOD OUTSIDE IN THE HALL SHADOWS...

THAT WASN'T NICE OF YOU ROY... TELLING ANY YOU HAD NO TIES...

I DON'T! I STILL DON'T!



I DON'T BELONG TO ANYBODY, PAT! NEITHER YOU... NOR AMY! I TAKE WHAT I GET! IT'S A BIG RANGE AND I GRAZE WHERE THE GRASS IS GREENEST! NOW I GUESS IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GIT MOVIN'! I'LL GO BACK TO THE RANCH WITH YOU AND GET MY THINGS...

ALL RIGHT, ROY! LET'S GO...



THE BOYS IN THE BUNK HOUSE WATCHED ROY AS HE PACKED HIS CLOTHES...



PAT CALLED TO HIM FROM THE RANCH HOUSE AS HE WALKED PAST...



YOU FORGOT SOMETHIN', ROY!

YEAH? WHAT?



ROY CAME INTO THE RANCH HOUSE. PAT CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND HIM AND SILENTLY LOCKED IT AS ROY LOOKED AROUND...



THE BLAZE IN THE FIREPLACE BURNED BRISKLY...



PAT DARTED TO THE FIREPLACE...SNATCHING THE BLACK HANDLE FROM THE FLAMES, THE DESIGN GLOWED WHITE-HOT...



WHEN THE BUNK HOUSE BOYS FINALLY BROKE INTO THE RANCH HOUSE, THEY FOUND PATRICIA GIBSON SOB-BING HYSTERICALLY, THE COOLING IRON IN HER HANDS! AND ON ROY'S FACE WAS THE BLISTERED AND CHARRED RESULTS OF HER WORK...



...TWO FOR THE SHOW!

THE STORM BREWED. ITS THUNDER WAS THE HAMMERING ROAR OF A POUNDING HEART. ITS LIGHTNING WAS THE FLASH OF HATE IN GLAZED EYES. THE STORM CARRIED WITH IT, IN SWIRLING CLOUDS OF EMOTION, THE CRASHING FURY OF MURDER. THE STORM CROUCHED IN THE CELLAR, READY TO LEASH FORTH ITS ANGRY FORCE, ITS SCREAMING DOWNPOUR. IT CROUCHED IN THE CELLAR AND BOILED AS THE CELLAR DOOR OPENED. IT ROSE UP, BLACK AND FOREBODING, AS SHE CAME DOWN THE CREAKING WOODEN STAIRS. AND THEN, AS SHE REACHED THE BOTTOM, THE STORM BROKE...

HARRY! MY GOD! EEEEEEEEEEE...



SHE WAS DEAD. HARRY STOOD OVER HER, THE DRIPPING HATCHET HANGING LIMPLY DEEP DOWN INSIDE HIM, THE LAST FAINT ECHO OF THE STORM DIED AWAY AND A CALM DESCENDED. THE THUNDER IN HIS HEART WAS GONE... THE LIGHTNING IN HIS EYES DIMMED...

IT... IT'S *DONE*, SARAH. IT'S... *DONE*...



THERE WAS A PEACE IN HARRY NOW... AS IF A GREAT BLACK CLOUD HAD BEEN SWEEPED AWAY AND THE SUN WAS AT LAST SHINING ON HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME. AND THERE WAS COOLNESS THERE... THE COOLNESS OF A DETERMINED MAN... A MAN WHO'D FREED HIMSELF FROM THE FIRES OF HATE. HE TOOK THE SHOVEL AND BEGAN TO DIG...

I'LL *BURY* YOU, SARAH... *HERE*... IN THE CELLAR. I'LL BURY YOU AND THEN I'LL REPORT YOU *MISSING*. I'LL TELL THEM YOU *WENT AWAY* AND NEVER CAME *BACK*...



THE HOLE IN THE CELLAR YAWNED HUNGRILY. HARRY FED IT SARAH'S BODY, AND THE BLACKNESS GULPED IT DOWN...

IN... YOU... SO...



THEN THE BLACK MOUTH SHUT ON SARAH AS HARRY SHOVELED THE DIRT BACK INTO THE HOLE. HE SPREAD THE EXCESS DIRT AROUND AND TAMPED IT DOWN...

THERE! FINISHED...



HARRY CARRIED THE SHOVEL AND AXE UP THE CELLAR STAIRS INTO THE KITCHEN. HE TURNED ON THE SINK-TAP AND THE WATER SPLASHED FROM THE CHROME FAUCET. FIRST... HE RINSED THE BLOOD FROM THE HATCHET...



NEXT, HE FLUSHED THE SOIL FROM THE SHOVEL AND LET IT WASH DOWN THE DRAIN. THEN... HE TOOK THEM BOTH OUT TO THE TOOL SHED AND PUT THEM ON THEIR PROPER HOOKS...

ABOUT MIDNIGHT, I'LL CALL THE POLICE. I'LL TELL THEM SARAH DIDN'T COME HOME FROM WORK TONIGHT...



HARRY WENT BACK INSIDE AND SAT DOWN IN HIS FAVORITE CHAIR. HE PICKED UP THE EVENING PAPER, LIT HIS PIPE, AND BEGAN TO READ. IT WAS AS IF NO STORM HAD EVER LASHED OUT THAT NIGHT. IT WAS AS IF NOTHING HAD EVER HAPPENED...



AT MIDNIGHT, HARRY MADE HIS CALL. HE ACTED UPSET...

THAT'S RIGHT, SARAH JAMESON, 125 ELM. SHE... SHE *HASN'T* COME HOME FROM WORK. NO! NO, SHE DIDN'T GO TO A MOVIE. SHE WOULD HAVE TOLD ME! NO, SHE'S NOT VISITING! IT'S *AFTER MIDNIGHT!* SHE NEVER STAYS OUT THIS LATE! WHAT? YOU'LL PUT OUT AN ALARM? GOOD. YOU'LL STOP BY THE MORNING? ALL RIGHT.



IN THE MORNING, THE DETECTIVE CAME. HARRY WAS READY...

I... I THOUGHT SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED. OH? LET'S GO TO HER OFFICE. I'M SORRY, BUT AFTER I SPOKE TO YOU, I WENT TO BED. I FOUND THIS NOTE... ON MY PILLOW. SHE... SHE'S LEFT ME!



THE DETECTIVE READ THE NOTE HARRY HAD CAREFULLY FORGED. HE SHOOK HIS HEAD...

WELL... THIS KIND OF THING HAPPENS EVERY DAY, MR. JAMESON. MAYBE SHE'LL COME BACK. WHO KNOWS...

I. I HOPE SO. I. I GUESS I WAS A THOUGHTLESS HUSBAND. I NEVER DREAMED SHE'D... SOB...



MIND IF I LOOK AROUND, MR. JAMESON... AS LONG AS I'M HERE?

NOT AT ALL! SO RIGHT AHEAD.



THE DETECTIVE OPENED THE BEDROOM CLOSET DOOR. HARRY HAD FORSEEN THAT. HE'D BURNED SARAH'S CLOTHES IN THE FURNACE.

AFTER I READ THE NOTE, I LOOKED IN HERE. I SAW SHE'D PACKED HER THINGS...

HMMM... YES, I SEE...



HARRY OPENED SARAH'S BUREAU DRAWER...

HER UNDERTHINGS... EVERYTHING... GONE. SHE MUST HAVE COME HOME FROM WORK AND PACKED AND LEFT BEFORE I GOT HOME...

LOOKS THAT WAY...



THE DETECTIVE SNOOPED AROUND SOME MORE. HE SEEMED SATISFIED. HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE WHEN HE STOPPED AT THE OPEN BATHROOM DOOR. HE STARED IN. HARRY FELT A SUDDEN CHILL...

THAT'S FUNNY!

WHAT'S THAT, OFFICER?



THE DETECTIVE WENT TO THE RACK ABOVE THE SINK. HE POINTED AT THE TWO TOOTHBRUSHES...

MRS. JAMESON'S?

HUH? OH, YES! SHE... SHE MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN IT!



THE DETECTIVE SHOOK HIS HEAD. HE LOOKED AT HARRY. LOOKED AT HIM HARD...

FOR A WOMAN WHO PACKED SO CAREFULLY... TO FORGET HER TOOTHBRUSH, MR. JAMESON? I HARDLY THINK SO!

I. I DON'T UNDERSTAND, SIR! WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT?



THE DETECTIVE GRIMACED.

I HAVE A FEELING, MR. JAMESON... A FEELING THAT SOMETHING'S **WRONG** HERE. IF YOU DON'T MIND, I THINK WE'LL **INVESTIGATE** YOUR WIFE'S SUDDEN DISAPPEARANCE **AFTER ALL**.

WHY... WHY OF COURSE, OFFICER. GO **RIGHT AHEAD...**

...AND WHEN YOU **FIND** HER, TELL HER I'M **SORRY**... TELL HER TO **COME BACK** TO ME... TELL HER I **NEED** HER. **WILL YOU?**

YEAN, MR. JAMESON. **SURE**. I'LL TELL HER. **IF I FIND HER!**

THE DETECTIVE WAS GONE. HARRY STOOD AT THE DOOR, SHIVERING...

HE **KNOWS**. I... I'VE GOT TO **DO** SOMETHING. HE'LL **COME BACK WITH A WARRANT!** THEY'LL **SEARCH** THE HOUSE... **FIND** THE FRESH-DUG GRAVE IN THE **CELLAR**. I'VE GOT TO **DO** SOMETHING...

HARRY WENT UP INTO THE ATTIC. HE PULLED THE TRUNK FROM BENEATH THE PILE OF DUSTY OLD RELICS...

YES, YES. IT'S THE **ONLY WAY**. I'VE GOT TO **GET HER BODY OUT OF THE HOUSE**... GOT TO **GET RID** OF IT. AND I THINK I **KNOW NOW...**



HARRY DRAGGED THE TRUNK DOWN INTO THE CELLAR. THEN HE WENT TO THE TOOL SHED, AND GOT THE SHOVEL AND THE HATCHET AND BROUGHT THEM TO THE CELLAR. HE BEGAN TO **DIG...**

AN **UNIDENTIFIABLE BODY**... IN A TRUNK. HOW COULD THEY TRACE IT TO **ME...**?



SARAH'S BATTERED AND BLOODY BODY WAS STIFF WITH RIGOR MORTIS WHEN HARRY LIFTED IT FROM ITS GRAVE. HE DUMPED IT INTO THE TRUNK...

NOW TO MAKE **SURE** IT WILL BE AN **UNIDENTIFIABLE BODY**.



HARRY PICKED UP THE HATCHET AND BEGAN TO **HACK**. THE BLADE **ROSE** AND **FELL**... **ROSE** AND **FELL**... UNTIL THE THING BEFORE HIM MELTED AWAY INTO A MASS OF **RED BLOSS** AND **WHITE BONE**... **COUNTLESS** SEVERED SECTIONS OF A **ONCE WHOLE HUMAN BODY**.

UGH... UGH... UGH... **BAD!** **THERE!** **THAT OUGHT TO DO IT!**



THE TRAIN PULLED OUT AND HARRY BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF. AFTER A WHILE HE WENT FORWARD TO THE BAGGAGE CAR...

JUST CHECKING, YOU HAVE A BROWN TRUNK... OH... THERE IT IS!

THIS ONE? 266-95! TO PEORIA?



HARRY CHECKED HIS TICKET...

NO. 266-BI... TO CHICAGO. THAT OH... HERE IT IS. WHY THEY'RE ALMOST EXACTLY ALIKE!

THAT HAPPENS. DON'T WORRY I'LL BE CAREFUL, SIR!



HARRY WENT BACK TO THE CLUB CAR. HIS BLOOD FROZE AS HE ENTERED. THE DETECTIVE WAS SITTING THERE, DRINKING A LEMONADE...

CHOKED...



HARRY DUCKED BACK, FAST. HIS HEART BEGAN TO POUND LIKE A TRIP-HAMMER. THAT BLASTED DETECTIVE. HE WAS HOUNDING HARRY... FOLLOWING HIM TO CHICAGO. AND AT CHICAGO, THERE'D BE NO SARAH TO MEET HARRY... AND HE'D GET SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THE TRUNK...

THE TRUNK? OF COURSE! WHAT A BREAK!



HARRY MADE HIS WAY BACK TO THE BAGGAGE CAR...

THAT OTHER TRUNK! IF I COULD SWITCH TICKETS, MY TRUNK WILL BE TOSSED OFF AT PEORIA... WITH SARAH'S REMAINS IN IT...



THE BAGGAGE CAR WAS DIMLY LIT AS HARRY ENTERED. THE CLERK DOZED IN A CORNER. HARRY SLIPPED PAST HIM...

AND I'LL HAVE THE OTHER ONE. I'LL BE SAFE!



HARRY UNTIED THE TICKETS AND SWITCHED THEM. HE PATTED HIS TRUNK... THE ONE WITH THE GRISLY CARGO...

SO LONG, SARAH! SOMEBODY IN PEORIA IS GOING TO BE ANFULLY SHOCKED TO SEE WHAT'S LEFT OF YOU...



THEN HE LOOKED THE TRUNK AND DRAGGED IT OUT TO HIS CAR. AFTER REFILLING THE HOLE IN THE CELLAR AND CLEANING HIS TOOLS ONCE MORE, HE DROVE DOWN-TOWN TO THE RAILROAD STATION...

I'D LIKE TO BUY A TICKET TO CHICAGO, PLEASE, ON THE NEXT TRAIN PULL-MAN... LOWER BERTH...

THAT WILL BE \$42.50, SIR! HERE YOU ARE. YOU LEAVE IN TWENTY MINUTES...



AFTER PURCHASING HIS TICKET, HARRY DROVE THE CAR AROUND TO THE BAGGAGE RAMP...

I'D LIKE THIS TRUNK SENT ON TO CHICAGO! HERE'S MY TICKET.

YES, SIR! THAT WILL GO ON THE SAME TRAIN, SIR! IN THE BAGGAGE CAR...



IT WAS SO SIMPLE. NO NAME ON THE TRUNK. NOTHING BUT A NUMBER CORRESPONDING TO THE TICKET HARRY NEVER INTENDED TO USE. THAT IS, UNTIL...

GOING SOMEWHERE, MR. JAMESON?

HUH? OH! IT'S YOU...



HE'D FOLLOWED HARRY. HE SUSPECTED. HARRY SMILED...

YES! IT'S MY WIFE. SHE CALLED...FROM CHICAGO. ALL IS FORGIVEN. I'M GOING THERE. SEE? MY TICKET.

... AND THE TRUNK?



SARAH TOOK ALL OUR SUITCASES. IT'S THE ONLY THING I COULD PACK MY CLOTHES INTO. YOU SEE, WE'RE STAYING ON A WHILE... SORT OF A SECOND HONEYMOON.

THAT'S NICE, MR. JAMESON. I'M HAPPY FOR YOU FOR BOTH OF YOU. I'LL SEE YOU OFF...



HARRY'D HAVE TO GO NOW. THERE WAS NO WAY OUT. THE TRAIN WAS LEAVING IN TEN MINUTES. HARRY WENT THROUGH THE GATE ABSENTLY, TRYING TO THINK. WHAT COULD HE DO WITH THAT TRUNK? NOW COULD HE GET RID OF IT? THE DETECTIVE WAS AT HIS SIDE...

WELL, GOOD-BYE, OFFICER. THANK YOU...FOR EVERYTHING.

THERE'RE A FEW MINUTES LEFT, JAMESON! I'LL WALK YOU TO YOUR SEAT.



HARRY FOUND HIS CAR AND WENT INSIDE. THE DETECTIVE FOLLOWED. HE SMILED DOWN AT HARRY...

WELL, GIVE MY REGARDS TO MRS. JAMESON WHEN YOU SEE HER.

I WILL, OFFICER. AND THANKS AGAIN!



CHICAGO'S LA SALLE STREET STATION CAME UP AMID WHISTLE SCREAMS AND HISSING STEAM. HARRY PEERED OUT OF THE WINDOW. SOMEONE LEANED OVER HIS SHOULDER. THE DETECTIVE...

SEE HER, JAMESON? **N-NO!** SHE SHE PROBABLY DIDN'T GET MY MESSAGE...



YOU *DON'T* SEEM VERY SURPRISED TO *SEE* ME, JAMESON!



I'M *NOT!* I SAW YOU IN THE CLUB CAR LAST NIGHT! WELL, I'VE GOT TO BE GOING, OFFICER!



NOT SO *FAST*, JAMESON! I HAPPEN TO THINK YOUR WIFE ISN'T *GOING* TO SHOW UP HERE IN CHICAGO AT *ALL*. I HAPPEN TO THINK YOU *MURDERED* HER, AND HER *BODY'S* IN THAT *TRUNK* OF YOURS.



YOU HAPPEN TO BE *WRONG*, OFFICER. CARE TO TAKE A *LOOK?*



HARRY AND THE DETECTIVE MADE THEIR WAY TO THE BAGGAGE OFFICE, AND HARRY PRESENTED HIS TICKET...

GO AHEAD, OFFICER. OPEN 'ER UP!



NOT *HERE*, JAMESON. AT *HEADQUARTERS*. OH, PORTER...

THEY RODE ACROSS CHICAGO TO POLICE HEADQUARTERS IN SILENCE. HARRY CHUCKLED TO HIMSELF. HE'D BEEN PRETTY CLEVER. THE TRUNK WAS BROUGHT INTO A SMALL ROOM. THE DETECTIVE LIFTED THE LID...



GOOD LORD!

WELL? SATISFIED, OFFICER? NOW, CAN I... OH, MY GOD!

A MASS OF RED BLOSS AND WHITE BONE FILLED THE TRUNK... COUNTLESS SEVERED SECTIONS OF A ONCE HUMAN BODY. HARRY SCREAMED AS THE HANDCUFFS WERE SNAPPED ON HIS WRIST...

YOU *SWITCHED THEM BACK!* YOU *SWITCHED THE TICKETS BACK!* YOU *KNEW I KILLED HER* AND YOU *SWITCHED THEM BACK!*



I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT, JAMESON, BUT THANKS FOR THE CONFESSION. G'MON, LET'S GO!

MEANWHILE, IN ONE OF THOSE FAST-DISAPPEARING EAST SIDE MANSIONS, HARRIET WALKER STOOD OVER HER MANSION SON, RUNNING HER HAND THROUGH HIS SHAGGY HAIR...

DID YOU... DID YOU GET RID OF WHAT WAS LEFT OF HER, MOTHER?



YES, ERIC. *CLEVERLY, TOO!* I PUT ANITA'S REMAINS IN AN OLD TRUNK, BOUGHT A TICKET TO PEORIA, ILLINOIS, AND HAD IT SHIPPED ON AHEAD OF COURSE. I'LL NEVER USE THE TICKET...



THE
END

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ON SALE JUNE, 1990



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ON SALE MAY, 1990



(continued from inside front cover)

ourselves. That is why **Tales From the Crypt**, **The Vault of Horror**, and **The Haunt of Fear** are as apt today as they were forty years ago.

If we see a victim being stalked by an ax-murderer with the requisite cleaver in hand, our sensation will be terror; but let that murderer be a zombie, a vampire, a werewolf, or anything akin, and our response is horror. That's what E.C.s are all about.

In make-believe horror there is always something hidden, something still and ever-



concealed, some forbidden knowledge, a kept secret. We don't quite know. But we would like to find out if we could do so safely. That's why Gladstone feels E.C. horror will strike the same responsive chord with readers today as it did in the 1950s. It's generally acknowledged that horror is not just an aspect of human experience, but a central part of it!

Had Newton really been right, and had there really been laws to govern all change, there could be no horror; only temporary ignorance, only terror. The sleep of reason, contended Goya in 1798, produces monsters and monsters have always been the prime carriers of horror. They are always "out there," rising from the ooze of the subconscious, like sea-beasts on the horizons of ancient maps and they are never totally nonhuman. The ancient monsters—the centaur, the sphinx, the minotaur—are partly brute and partly human, and the brute part is not in itself frightening. So too the modern monsters—the vampire, the Frankenstein monster, and the werewolf—are images of horror not because they do dreadful things to us (although they may well), but because they block our attempts to classify, categorize, and hence control them.

H. G. Wells generated intense horror in **The Island of Dr. Moreau** (1896) simply by dispassionately describing the harmless mutants created by the "mad scientist" who infused human forms and attributes into the animal world; Victor Hugo

achieved the same effect by "crossing" Quasimodo with the gargoyle.

It would be nice to think that a proper education could rid one of a hunger for horror, but theologians like John Wesley have always known better. Horror images have always been more than fear-jerkers; they are invariably the most subtle projections of buried and repressed fear. When it comes right down to it, the fascinating question is not why monsters were so suddenly obvious in the late eighteenth century, but how they could have been suppressed with such success for so long!

The invocation of horror has always been present in the English tradition from **Beowulf** on. In modern versions we forget the victims and even the hero, but we remember the monster! Everyone who read the original E.C.s remembers a favorite today. . . and it is usually the monster or the deed that stands out. Thinking back to your own high school or college literature class, do you remember who, for instance, kills Dracula? How is the Frankenstein monster destroyed? Are we sure the werewolf is dead? Monsters have become bogeymen, and as the child in **Halloween** says, "Ya can't ever kill the bogeyman."

We read for enjoyment, including horror. But we



keep coming back because of memories. A cult of E.C. collectors began in the '50s and has survived to this day, though most think of themselves just as "fans." Some of the same ones who made contact with each other through the Letters to the GhouLunatics pages in those days still are in touch with each other today.

(We would like to thank Jim Twitchell, who is currently Alumni Professor of English at the University of Florida, for his permission to excerpt portions from his book, **Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror**, published by Oxford University Press. We apologize for any points that may have been lost by our abbreviations of his words or any changes of meaning that may have resulted from our blending of his thoughts with an occasional brief insertion of our own.

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